

---

This is a reproduction of a library book that was digitized by Google as part of an ongoing effort to preserve the information in books and make it universally accessible.

Google™ books

<https://books.google.com>





G918.7 B279V LAC

Arthur. L. Bacon.  
April 16<sup>th</sup> 1887.



THE LIBRARY  
OF  
THE UNIVERSITY  
OF TEXAS

G918.7  
B279v

7/6



[REDACTED]  
G918.7 B279V LAC

Arthur. L. Bacon.  
April 16<sup>th</sup> 1887



THE LIBRARY  
OF  
THE UNIVERSITY  
OF TEXAS  
G918.7  
B279v

This Book is Due on the Latest Date Stamped

GG-13

NOV 15 1950

MAR 18 1979 RET'D FEB 20 1979 LAC

MAR 09 1994

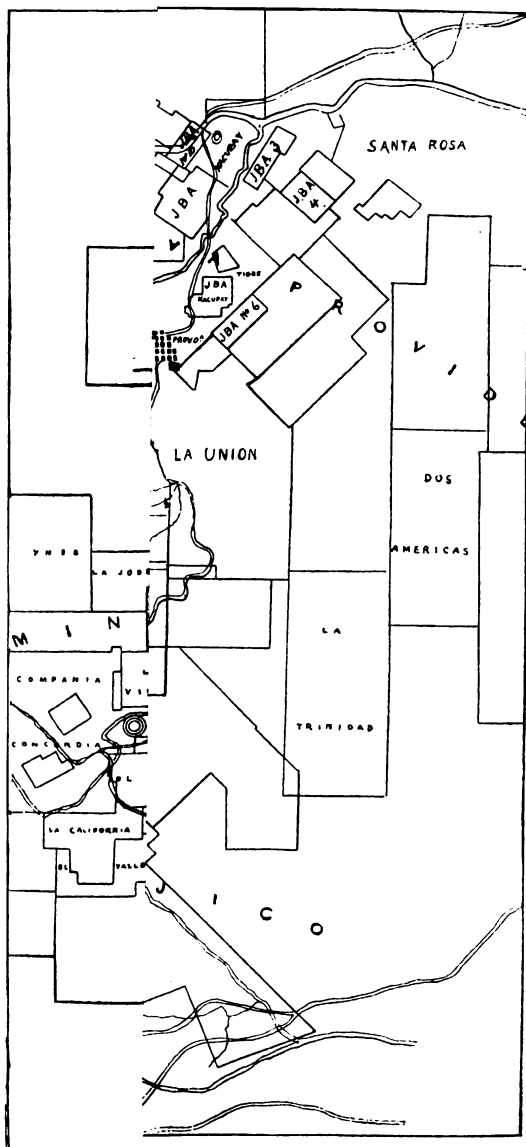
RET'D BLAC

MAR 28 1994

7/4







# VENEZUELA :

A VISIT TO THE GOLD MINES OF GUYANA,  
AND  
VOYAGE UP THE RIVER ORINOCO DURING 1886,

WITH A BRIEF SKETCH OF  
THE MINERAL WEALTH AND RESOURCES  
OF VENEZUELA,

AND ITS  
HISTORY TO THE PRESENT TIME.

WITH A MAP OF THE MINES;  
AND APPENDICES CONTAINING THE MINING LAWS OF VENEZUELA,  
REPORT ON THE MINES BY THE MINISTER OF WAR,  
EXTRACT FROM BRITISH CONSULAR REPORTS,  
AND AN OUTLINE OF THE CLAUSES OF TREATIES UNDER  
WHICH GREAT BRITAIN CLAIMS CERTAIN TERRITORIES  
ON THE ESSEQUIBO;

BY

**WILLIAM BARRY, C.E.**

FIRST EDITION.

London :  
MARSHALL BROS., AMEN CORNER,  
1886.



THE LIBRARY  
THE UNIVERSITY  
OF TEXAS

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

Reasons for journey—Leave Southampton—Description of Passengers—Rough passage—Reach Barbadoes—St. Vincent—Grenada—Treatment on Board—Tropical storm—Description of Grenada—Government officials—Reasons of Native indolence—Arrive at Trinidad—Gulf of Paria—Port of Spain—Visit to sugar estate—Improved processes—Increasing plantations of Cacao—Extra taxation on goods to Venezuela—Venezuelan Generals—Use of the knife.

CHAPTER II.

Leave for Cindad Bolivar—Passport system—Going up the Orinoco—Difficulties of Navigation—Indians—Plantations—Barrancas—Shipping cattle—Raleigh's Fort—Buried Treasures—Las Tablas—Sport on the river—Cindad Bolivar—Description of Statues—Heat—Locusts—Hospital—Water supply—Mosquitoes—Custom House—Hotel accommodation—High-handed justice—Telegraphs—Ferry boats—Danger—Numerous upsets—Meteor seen.

CHAPTER III.

Sketch of early History of Venezuela—Pearl fishery—Name of Guyana—Aguerra, his death—Barre's attempt—Raleigh's voyages to Venezuela—Trinidad taken by Sir Ralf Abercrombie—Establishment of Missions—Capital—Caracas—Railway—Zamboes—Changes of Presidents—Grants of land—Concessions—Injury to Country—Tonquin beans—Extra duties on Trinidad imports—Exorbitant Customs—Charges—Stamps, &c.

CHAPTER IV.

No banks—Drain of specie from Guyana—Coinage of money—Discontent in Guyana—Neglect of—Guyana a separate State—Mining district—England's claim to Watershed of Essequibo—Emigration from Demerara—Waterway and carriage from Demerara—Rising of miners—Military power—Mining Code—Report of Minister—Coyuni river.

CHAPTER V.

Treatment by Spaniards—Their Cruelties—Successive Bands—Missions—First Rebellion—Final rising—African Slaves—Freedom—Earthquake—War to the death—Constitution—Succession of Presidents—Gusman Blanco—Venezuelan Loan.

586718

*Gerald Neale, Ltd.*

## CHAPTER VI.

Venezuela, boundaries of—Size—Population—Guyana—Division—French Explorers—Forest belt about equator—Upata—Description of scenery—Cattle and horse farming—Roads—Railway—Prospects of—Improvements of roads—Difficulties of transit—Tolls—Capabilities of Guyana.

## CHAPTER VII.

Journey to the mines—Down the river to Las Tablas—Custom House—Hotel—Start with Mules—Falls of Caroni—Lost in the storm—St. Jose—A sporting adventure—Paradara—Upata—Crossing the Divide—La Florida—Guacipati—Rejoicings there.

## CHAPTER VIII.

Departure from Guacipati—Ride to Callao—Description of—El Callao Mine—Callao Bis—New Callao—West Callao—Caratal district—Chili—Austin's Concessions—Panama—Potosi or Peru—La Victoria—Gold surface diggings—Quartz mining—Return to Las Tablas—Union and Cartago—Lode and machinery—Half-ounce—Company, formation of—Probable.

## CHAPTER IX.

Start from Las Tablas—Cindad Bolivar—Boat hiring—Crew—Start—Pass mouth of Coroni—Cross current—One-eyed Captain—Steering—Chances of upset—Gale of wind—Stop for the night—Beasts, &c., as neighbours—River beasts, birds, and fishes—Scenery—Sunrise—Off again—Cooking on board—Second day—Run before the wind—Stoppages—Second night—Captain's fears—Trading—In sight of Bolivar—Crew pulling against the stream—Stuck on a rock—Caymans—Port at last—Military demonstrations—A prisoner—Fancy shooting—Shelter—Bolivar in a Scare—Seizure of steamer—Machinery sent up river—Safe return and shipment to Las Tablas.

## CHAPTER X.

Leave Bolivar—Locusts—Down the river—Touch at Las Tablas—Barrancas—Ship 200 cattle—Down the river—Reach Trinidad—Delay for six days—Stupidity of arrangements—Life in Trinidad—On board the Eden—Grenada—St. Vincent—Barbadoes—Change to R.M.S. Para—Quarantine—Smallpox—Yellow fever—Fine passage—Azores—Plymouth—England again.


## CHAPTER XI.

### CONCLUDING REMARKS.

Appendix A.—Report on Mines by Venezuelan Minister. Appendix B.—Mining Laws of Venezuela. Appendix C.—Consul Reddan's Report, 1885. Appendix D.—Treaties ceding Great Britain the district of Essequibo.

THE LIBRARY  
THE UNIVERSITY  
OF TEXAS

CHAPTER I.

HE year 1885 will be long remembered for the great depression in trade, and no class suffered more severely than British investors in Foreign mining properties; more especially in gold mines. The average investor, terrified by the fall in securities, rushed headlong into the market, to get rid of his already depreciated property, and by his own foolish impetuosity, added considerably to his losses, by still further depressing an already falling market. Every one was anxious to get out on any terms, and gold mines, whether good or bad, became a drug in the market.

Of all these mines, those in South America fell most into disrepute. It was remembered that the only mine which was a paying concern in Venezuela, was owned and worked by parties resident on the spot, and that hitherto no English adventure in that country had been successful. The Victoria Gold Company of Venezuela, of which at that time I was a shareholder, was no exception to the general rule. Its shares fell to nothing. The directors were accused of all sorts of misdemeanours, and some even went so far as to say that there was no mine or property of that name whatever.

In consequence of all these adverse reports and criticisms, the Company came to a standstill until early in January, 1886, when some of the shareholders, recovering a little from their panic, determined to reform

## 6 VENEZUELA : ITS MINERAL WEALTH.

the Company under the name of "Victory, Limited," and to send out one of their directors to investigate and report upon the capabilities of the property, and put the affair into working order. Finally I was selected for this purpose, and accordingly, armed with the fullest powers and with an efficient staff, I left England by Royal Mail Steamship from Southampton, early in March, 1886.

A passenger steamer is indeed a world in miniature. Among our 50 passengers, every class seemed represented: Royalty by the governor of one of our West India Islands with his wife and family, who were graciously condescending, yet conscious of their own importance: Military rule by a colonel going to take up his command, who seemed to have swallowed all the ramrods of his regiment after their disuse, and whose digestion had not enabled him to get rid of them, so stiff and upright was he: the Navy by a most genial captain and pleasant officers of the ship: the Clergy, as usual, were well represented, from the orthodox English clergyman down to a small choir of salvationists, who were taking their peculiar doctrines to a foreign clime, and who were in the habit of giving us their songs every evening: the comic element was there in force; it was from them that the following hymn was proposed as a pleasing variety to the salvationist leader, and likely to be of use where they were going:—

God Almighty love the nigger,  
God Almighty love him well,  
God Almighty love the nigger,  
And he know him by him smell !



The majesty of the Law by barristers of family, who, being utter failures at home, were thought good enough to be made judges to dispense law in her Majesty's colonies: Music and Arts by one or two young ladies who could play and sing, and several more who thought they could, together with the usual male tenor, who sang sentimental songs of the "Dearest Ever" and "My Darling" class, with great muscular exertion about his shoulders, and the bold baritone, who nightly favours with "As we lay, all that day, in the Ba-ha-hay of Biscay ho! a Scotch gentleman also had a fiddle, on which he was very proud of scraping out "Auld lang Syne," "Coming thro' the Rye," "The MacGregor's Gathering," &c., about midnight, while sitting on the taffrail, in a dismal and utterly out of time and tune manner, which was very depressing: Sport also had its representative in a young gentleman of our own party, who, having provided himself with quite an arsenal in the way of rifles, revolvers, bowie knives, and ammunition, was constantly enquiring about the prospect of shooting big game in South America, and expressing his fervent desire to come face to face with tigers.

Our voyage out, was, for the first 6 days, a constant succession of gales, during which most of the passengers favored a strict retirement in their own cabins. The few of us who remained, seemed to get on very pleasantly together, although we somewhat roused the ire of the worthy chief mate, by christening the ship "The old Steam Roller," a name she fairly earned by her constant sideway action, which had the effect of

## 8 VENEZUELA : ITS MINERAL WEALTH.

generally depositing any unwary promenaders in the lee scuppers, frequently causing our soup to exchange its place in our plates for the outsides of our waistcoats, and on one occasion all the tureens of soup and the chief steward and his satellites on the cabin floor.

At last the long wished for fine weather came, and, when two days from Barbadoes, we mustered a full table, and the ladies appeared on deck. Quoits as played on board ship engaged the male passengers. Music in the evenings, and on the last one our Captain enclosed the quarter-deck with side awnings, and by the light of colored lanterns a very pleasant ball room was improvised. Every one relaxed, and general regrets were expressed at the prospect of closing our voyage so soon. We reached the harbour of Barbadoes just in time to get to our anchorage before dark, being some 10 hours behind time, after one of the roughest passages the ship had ever experienced and with strong head winds most of the way.

At Barbadoes we separated to pursue our ways by the different intercolonial steamers, which are appointed to convey the mails to the islands and ports.

Our party went on by the one which, touching at St. Vincent and Grenada, eventually landed us at Trinidad.

The first thing all passengers do on reaching Barbadoes is to rush on shore and consume a lunch of flying fish and tropical fruits, washed down with rum punch iced at the ice house, and then look at the latest news from England which is there posted up in the shape of

telegrams received daily, containing a summary of the most important news. Having duly conformed to these customs, and wandered for some time about the streets, which were busy enough with the mule carts bringing sugar hogsheads for shipment, then actively going on, negro and colored women in their bright dresses selling fruit and provisions, and men of the same class all carrying whatever they had on their heads; we returned to our ship and proceeded to transport ourselves and baggage to R. M. S. "Esk," one of the intercolonial boats, of 2600 tons or thereabouts. These vessels are specially constructed with a view to the comfort of passengers in hot climates, and are very convenient and cool, cabins well arranged, saloon large and well fitted, and a number of separate tables, holding eight or ten each, provided, so that parties may contrive to be together as much as they please. A ladies' cabin and smoking room also on deck, and the baths, lavatories, &c., all that can be desired. I wish I could say as much about the living, but the old saying that "while God finds food the devil finds cooks" is fully exemplified on these vessels. Whether it is that they think passengers should, on reaching hot climates, be acclimatised, and for this purpose they should eat little, and therefore appetising things should not be placed before them, or whether it is that the passengers in these boats are generally only there for two or three days, and it is a matter of little consequence how they fare for that short time, I will not venture to decide, but certain it is that the living does not come up to that supplied by the ships sailing from England to Barbadoes, and it is a matter

## 10 VENEZUELA : ITS MINERAL WEALTH.

which the Directors of the Royal Mail Steamers should look into if they desire to keep their passengers traffic which is now largely threatened by competing lines from France and New York, with increased accommodation and reduced fares.

We left Barbadoes at 6 p.m. with a very scratch lot of passengers, comprising Colonists of all sorts returning to their own islands ; Explorers going out either on their own account or for their various Governments ; Orchid collectors ; German shopkeepers and assistants, and quite a number of colored persons, male and female, principally from Martinique, proceeding to the gold mines in Venezuela in search of employment of one sort or another. These last were deck passengers, and with their belongings, were herded together on the deck forward without shelter.

On our arrival at St. Vincent, we had our first experience of a tropical storm. For four hours the heavens were literally opened, and rain descended in torrents. Tons of water fell on the decks driving the passengers below, and even the lower decks were not free from the deluge. About 2 a.m. the rain moderated, and the Captain having arrived from the shore (where he had been to dine with some island official), we started for Grenada. The following morning, on going forward to look out for land, I witnessed a sight worthy the pencil of a Callot. The wretched deck passengers—yellow, brown, and black—who had been exposed to the full fury of the tempest, were, in the morning sunshine drying their drenched plumes ; boxes, bags and bundles  
TxU

were opened, soaked and drenched finery hung up to dry. Here a colored lady had put on her best bib and Tucker, evidently an importation from some rag shop in Belgravia; there a darker matron in nearly nature's clothing. Men—some in trousers, some in coats only, and the majority in neither one nor the other, were hanging up their clothes in all places to dry, while others were occupied in preparing as best they might the morning meal, and all chattering like so many monkeys, in the best of spirits, and full of fun and repartee, for your French creole is to the full as quick and impulsive as the native Irishman of Ireland.

We arrived at Grenada about 5 a.m. As point after point was opened, exclamations of surprise and delight were heard on all sides. Seen under the rising sun, the town presented a truly lovely picture, while the rich estates surrounding it, and the hills crowned with primeval forest towering above all, formed a picture never to be forgotten. Grenada is justly termed the sanatorium of the West Indies. Not only is its climate delightful and salubrious, but its products are varied. Fruits of all sorts grow in profusion. Sugar, Coffee, Cocoa, Vanilla, Cinnamon, Cloves, Ginger, Nutmegs, Pimento abound. Pineapples of the finest sorts are now a large article of export. Limes, Lemons, Citrons, Oranges, Grapes, Bread Fruit, and Cocoa Nuts in profusion, while living is more moderate than at any other island. Yellow fever is unknown, and all other fevers and ailments very rare. Hospitality is still practised there on the true old West Indian style, and the visitor

## 12 VENEZUELA : ITS MINERAL WEALTH.

is made to feel himself at home in every place he enters, while the beautiful scenery and tropical vegetation in its most charming aspects allure him to excursions over this delightful island.

Grenada shares with the other islands in the present depression, owing to depreciation in price of cane sugar, and estates are being rapidly thrown up, to be replanted in Cacao. I shall have more to say on this subject when treating of Trinidad. Grenada is like other small islands, a Crown Colony, governed by a travelling governor with a resident subordinate, a chief judge and other assistants, who hold occasional assizes, and a whole tribe of subordinate officials, secretaries, &c., who seem to be sent there on the principles of *Lucus a Non Lucendo*; that is, because they know nothing about the real wants of the Colonies.

These gentry are generally what would be termed in a china factory, wasters; that is, either cracked, warped, or otherwise useless; cast offs from the foreign office, sent out to show off their clothes, incapacity and arrogance, at the expense of the colony they misunderstand and misgovern. A stipendiary magistrate of common intelligence and a dozen policeman, would serve to maintain order in any of these islands, but in that case, his excellency the governor, his sub-excellency the chief secretary, his high mightiness the chief judge, and their honors the subordinates, would have to get their living by their own exertions, which would in most cases be a very difficult matter to them. Consequently, the islands are taxed heavily, to furnish

salaries and appointments for these paupers, so that patronage may flourish, while these wretched dependencies have not even the privilege of voting their own taxation.

While sugar estates and coffee plantations paid their owners thousands a year, these things were only looked at as little vexations, but now, owing to the failure of both these sources of income, and the increased difficulty of obtaining, not a fortune, but a living, they are becoming a crying evil of great magnitude, and in the end will lead, in many instances, to the abandonment by the white cultivators, of their estates, which, falling gradually either into bush or the hands of a colored population, who are invincibly idle, and will not do a stroke more work than will provide them a bare subsistence, will fail to yield any returns, and the islands thereabouts must return to a state of savagery, perhaps as bad as that of St. Domingo or Hayti itself, where it is well known that even human flesh has been exposed publicly for sale in the markets. One great difficulty that presents itself to those who hope to excite emulation, and so stimulate activity in the colored population, is the total want of family or class pride.

One incentive to work among Europeans is the maintenance of a certain position and rank, and a desire to uphold the family. The coloured colonist has none of this. He is, so to speak, his own ancestor. He has no family pride. Whether he has become rich, and can ride in his carriage, or remains poor and walks about with a Breech cloth only, he claims equal respect and

586718

## 14 VENEZUELA : ITS MINERAL WEALTH.

attention from his fellows. All are alike, the sons and daughters of slaves, and the negro, with irreproachable hat and dress, will chat with (as an equal) the negro without any, or if not, then he is thought stuck up and proud, and becomes an object of mistrust and hatred to his class. What motive have they then for work. Clothes, except for display, are cumbersome and inconvenient in such a climate. No artistic tastes have been developed among them. The shelter of a few palm branches is quite as useful as the grandest mansion. As to food, a plantain or mango eaten in the open air suffices, and hitherto there have been no Gourmands among them. Their women from the highest to the lowest understand the preparation of certain dishes, such as Pepperpot (a very delicious dish), which is their highest form of cookery. They have coffee, cocoa, and sugar at hand, and as to liquors, new Rum has hitherto held the palm over Champagnes, Clarets, and all expensive European products. Why then should they work? Nature provides without trouble all they want. In some few generations perhaps they may recognise class distinctions, but unfortunately the leaning of the black race is back to barbarism, and whenever the white element in these islands disappears, which it must do if the present oppressive system of government is maintained, then I fear the hats and clothes will disappear also, and the natural man reappear in all his natural and unadorned majesty *Absit Omen*. After leaving Grenada where we obtained a plentiful supply of fruit of all kinds from the boats which came off to the ship, we proceeded on to Trinidad. The entrance to the Gulf of Para, at



the lower end of which Port of Spain is situated, is through three openings, called respectively Grand Bocca, Bocca del Serpente, and Bocca Chica. In approaching the coast which is very bold, presenting a solid face of rock many feet high, on which a heavy surge is constantly breaking, these mouths are with difficulty discernable ; and indeed, two of them are very narrow entrances, requiring careful navigation, and they are always approached in daylight. Many a gallant ship has laid her bones there, and even now, with all steam appliances, wrecks are frequent. We entered by the centre opening or Bocca del Serpente, and in a few minutes experienced the change from a wild open ocean to a quiet calm water, over which we steamed rapidly.

The Gulf of Para is formed by one of the mouths of the Orinoco, and is gradually closing up at the lower end, where the Port of Spain is situated, owing to the deposits of sand, &c., brought down yearly by the great river, which rises and falls with the greatest regularity. For six months it increases in volume and then for six months diminishes, the difference in depth being some 80 feet. This rise and fall is occasioned by the melting of the snows in the Andes, and is very little influenced by the rainy or dry seasons of Venezuela, through which it runs, for the greater part of its course.

Port of Spain, the Capital of Trinidad, situated at the lower end of the Gulf of Para, is a city of some considerable size, it is fairly healthy, and is surrounded by numerous villas and estates, to which the merchants and wealthier inhabitants retire after business hours.

## 16 VENEZUELA: ITS MINERAL WEALTH.

Great attention is now paid to the water supply and drainage, and during the day the town presents a very busy and active appearance. Like all the other islands Sugar has been the staple product, and is still very largely cultivated. Indeed the largest establishment for the manufacture of sugar, capable of turning out 70 to 80 tons per day, is situated about 30 miles by railway from the capital. Furnished with letters of introduction from Sir John Lubbock, we visited this factory, were shown all over it, and had the working and mode of manufacture explained by its very able and hospitable superintendent, Mr. Abel.

The principal building is a large erection, at one end of which the sugar canes are passed in from the railway trucks, which come close up, and after being crushed, boiled, evaporated, and put through all the most modern processes, the sugar in bags, and the rum in puncheons are ready for delivery at the other end, where, being again placed on the railway trucks, they are taken down to the port for shipment. Many sugar estates contribute their canes to supply this vast establishment; upwards of 25 miles of railway is laid through the fields of sugar, while seven steam engines and a proportionate number of waggons are constantly at work bringing up the cut cane, and removing the finished products. By this sort of joint stock premises the price of manufacturing is greatly reduced, and the best coloured crystals can be delivered free on board for £9 per ton, and at that price pay a fair interest on the capital employed. Unfortunately, with the present

competition from foreign countries, and the premiums allowed by them to their own manufacturers, in order to stimulate the production, and procure employment for their own population, these prices cannot now be obtained, and consequently the industry, so far as British Colonists are concerned, is falling off.

Proprietors of estates, who are obliged to erect their own mills, and manufacture their own crops, cannot compete. The cost of the newest machinery is enormous, and the return doubtful, so the properties are in many cases thrown up, in order that Germans and Frenchmen should be fully employed, and that Englishmen should have bad sugar at  $1\frac{1}{2}$ d., instead of good at 2d. per pound.

Many estates, formerly in sugar, are now being planted in cacao, which thrives well here, and which seems to be looked upon as the future crop of this island. The cultivation is easy, and little or no machinery required to prepare the beans for market, but it takes from five to seven years (according to situation) for the trees to come into bearing, which deters many private owners with small means from going into this cultivation, while large commercial houses in Glasgow or elsewhere, who hold, either by mortgage, or by making advances, numbers of sugar estates in many of the West India Islands, have, with a very short sighted policy, actually forbidden their overseers or managers to permit the planting of cacao, for fear that when once the trees were grown, and in bearing, the proprietors might

## 18 VENEZUELA : ITS MINERAL WEALTH.

escape from their clutches; as no advances would be required, and the estates here would consequently pass from their control, it being by their manipulations of the markets in England that the principal large profits are made.

The Governor's residence is very finely situated, about a mile from the town. The park surrounding it is planted with almost every variety of tree and plant, while the Botanical gardens adjoining are supposed to contain the finest and most varied assortment in the West Indies, and from it the Colonists are enabled to obtain new varieties and plants of cacao, coffee, chinchona, nutmegs, or whatever else they may desire to make plantations of. The collection of West Indian and South American orchids is unrivalled.

While Trinidad, by its position at the mouth of the Orinoco, should command a great trade with the province of Guyana, it is hampered and obstructed by the policy of the Venezuelan government, which imposes an extra *ad valorem* duty of 30 per cent. on whatever comes from or through Trinidad; and even ships touching there, are liable to this impost. This policy, so injurious to the trade of Venezuela itself, originated in the pique of one of its presidents, on account of the asylum afforded to rebels, who, having risen against the government and been defeated, found a safe refuge there, and a point of departure from which to organize future excursions. Port of Spain does, indeed, swarm with expatriated Venezuelan generals of

x Guyana Blanco

all sorts and kinds, mostly impecunious, and ready to accept a dollar or a dinner from any one disposed to offer either of these articles, while they retain all the pride and dignity of heroes fallen from their high estate.

Here they wait until some bolder spirit makes a new pronunciamiento, when they hurry eagerly, to fall, like vultures, on their poor native country, plundering everywhere, and murdering without remorse, any unfortunates of the other party who may chance to fall into their hands. If the venture, perchance, succeeds, then they become an everlasting drag on the new government, claiming rewards for services never rendered, often obtaining grants and concessions, ruinous to all trade ; or, if the venture (as is usually the case), fails, either through the leader having come to some private understanding with the government, by which he is paid to retire and desert his followers, or by some other general making some private arrangements to betray his leader and all the rest, then, in either of these cases, the survivors return to their lair in Trinidad, to await a more fortunate opportunity.

Apropos of Venezuelan generals, I heard a curious story out there :—

These worthies are the only people allowed to wear swords in public, consequently you will always know if a man is a general, for if so, he will surely have a sword.

A Major of one of our regiments, being out in Venezuela, riding through the interior, where it is usual

to go armed with pistol and knife, one morning, being about to pay a visit to the governor, asked his servant for his sword, intending to put it on with his uniform. The man gravely asked his rank in the army, and on being told, observed that officers of that rank, when not on duty, were not allowed to wear swords, but, that, if his master liked, he, being a general, would wear it, and when it was wanted, he could hand it over for use. The Major used to speak, afterwards, with great glee of his servant, "The General."

Trinidad relies greatly for its labour supply on Coolies and Chinese. These people are numerous, and have separate towns of their own. They are industrious and contrive to accumulate considerable property, but they are a migratory population, generally returning home when they have earned a sufficiency. Some, however, have finally settled down and become respectable and wealthy citizens. In their quarrels the use of the knife is very frequent, and wife murder through jealousy is a common crime. The present Chief Justice is doing all in his power to put down the use of the knife, by the most severe punishments.

## CHAPTER II.



**A**FTER some days spent at Port of Spain, varied by excursions to the most noteworthy spots, we embarked on board the steamer "Bolivar," to proceed up the Orinoco. This steamer, which runs between Port of Spain and Cindad Bolivar every fortnight, is the property of a Venezuelan company and is built on the American system, that is, with fine lines under water, and all the cabins, &c., on deck, high pressure beam engines, &c., and is capable of steaming 16 or 18 miles an hour with a very small draught of water. We were obliged, before embarking, to obtain a passport, and to produce a list of our luggage signed by the Consul. The time occupied by the journey is two days, and the fare 30 dollars or about £6 sterling.

We left Trinidad about 6 p.m., and ran up the Gulf of Para to the bar at the mouth of the river. Here there is very little water, and as the Orinoco was at its lowest, great doubts were expressed about our getting over, and if we stuck, we might (as we were told) remain there for a week or so until the river rose sufficiently to float us off. However, as it happened, we just scraped through with a bump or two, and early in the morning we were running up the mighty river against a current of some 4 miles an hour.

The channel chosen by the steamer is not that

## 22 VENEZUELA : ITS MINERAL WEALTH.

selected by sailing vessels or steamers of great draught, but is considered the shortest, and for scenery the most beautiful. Generally the channel seemed from one to two miles wide, while down to the water's edge ran the heavy primæval forest. | Occasionally large masses of the bank had given way, and the fallen trees lay far out in the stream, with their huge branches interlacing and intercepting the debris coming down, until at last new promontaries and islands were formed. At intervals openings would occur where lawn-like banks of grass ran down to the water's edge, dotted here and there with trees; many covered with blossoms, and at a distance closely resembling the upper reaches of the Thames. At another place the mangroves hung heavy over the water, extending their roots far outwards; while looking through their dark foliage the still water could be seen extending far away, terminating in dismal swamps, and through all this roamed leopards, tiger cats, tapirs, and monkeys at their own sweet will. | Flamingos, storks and cranes stalked about, of varied and beautiful colors; parrots and lories are flying over head, while ducks and waterfowl, of all sorts, up to swans are constantly being met with, and on all this fair land no human foot treads. Snakes of the most poisonous sorts infest the woods, while the caymans and fish of carnivorous propensities swarm in the water.

In every swamp and lagoon the dreaded electric eel abides in hundreds, while the great water snake often 50 feet in length is not uncommon. It seems the paradise of wild beasts, and the jaguar will stop while drinking, or



the tapir look up from browsing on the grass, and the monkey pause in his swinging from tree to tree as we hurry noisely by, while a drowsy alligator floats lazily on, his head half out of the water, without paying the least attention, until perhaps a conical bullet from a Winchester rifle, or from the revolver which every one carries, rouses him to a knowledge that it is not good to trust too much to mankind. As the day goes on we steam through miles and miles of such scenery, every succeeding bend opening up new beauties. Here islands clothed in verdure, anon the banks closing together so that we almost pass under the branches of overhanging trees, then widening out till the shores seem to recede almost from view and all under a burning, glistening sunlight, while the river with its dark brown water runs sullenly on without a ripple. All noises cease, the very air quivers with the heat, and the passengers, in desperation, and shirts and trousers, rush to the bar for cooling iced drinks to support exhausted nature. With the evening comes a renewal of the wild beasts' cries, the chatter of the monkeys and the screams of the birds. Then a great darkness and the steamer beats on her way, amid a gloom penetrable only by the experienced eye of our pilot. We are aroused very early by the news that we are approaching a settlement. Every one turns out, and we come suddenly upon an Indian village. Two or three canoes made of single logs, burnt out and scraped with shells into form; four or five houses, being merely poles stuck in the ground and covered with a thatch of palm leaves, while the population, in all its native simplicity and red

## 24 VENEZUELA: ITS MINERAL WEALTH.

colour, turns out to look at us. These Indians, who are harmless, live principally by fishing. They are of Carib descent and were formerly much more numerous, but the cruelties practised on them by successive parties of Spaniards, when on their way up this river, to excite a rebellion or revolution, or on their return after their failure, have driven them away, or at least much further back into the woods. Among other curious customs of these tribes is one which must sometimes put them to great inconvenience. If any one dies in a village, he is wrapped up in strips of fibre, then put into his canoe, if he has one, if not, into his hammock, and suspended as far from the ground as possible between two posts of his house, and then all the survivors leave the village and proceed to settle elsewhere. This must at certain seasons prove very inconvenient, and I am assured, on native testimony, that one astute old chief always had any of his people, who seemed to show symptoms of dissolution, carried away from the village to die in the woods, or be eaten there as the case might be, so saving the time and trouble of migration to the rest; but, added my informant, he was not always successful, as sometimes they would contrive to crawl back again to die.

These villages have about four or five acres of wood round them cleared out by fire, and here they grow Indian corn and plantains, sufficient—with the fish they catch—to keep them. Those I saw looked fat and well.

All this country for hundreds of miles on each side must eventually become very valuable. The land is of

the richest and most productive; the Indian corn there grown exceeds in size all I have ever seen. Let but the forest fall and the white man get a footing, and sugar, cotton, cacao, coffee, tobacco, spices and all sorts of fruits will grow in abundance, and make enormous returns; while the great river itself will prove a highway, facilitating their ready shipment to those less favored countries, which consume without being able to produce them.

We have passed the Indian village and half-a-dozen similar to it, and now we approach the first white settlement. This proves to be a single hut, varying but little from the Indian ones, except that it is enclosed partly by walls made of mud baked in the sun. The children too have something on, while one or two garments hang in the sun to dry, and the garden round shows a little more variety; some sugar canes, a papau tree and four or five cocoa nuts, but the canoe and the general dirt and squalor, and color too are very much the same. Leaving this lonely squatter we push on, and presently, on the right bank, we come in sight of a more pretentious abode. This is a small sugar plantation. We see the primitive appliances for crushing the cane, and the open boiling house, where in large iron pans, the juice is boiled and evaporated until a coarse brown product is obtained; the residue being converted into very good rum, in a still something like an old tea kettle. A Demerara planter would recoil with horror from this primitive mode of manufacture, but it answers the owner's purpose well enough; he has no competition to put up with.

All foreign sugars are absolutely prohibited, and once he has obtained permission to grow sugar, his product will command from five to six pence per pound. Think of this all you beetroot growers and free traders, who ruin your own Colonies for the benefit of foreigners with their draw-backs and bonuses.

House now succeeds house, and plantation plantation, with either sugar or tobacco, at every two or three miles, until we reach Barrancas, a straggling village with a large corral or penn, capable of holding three or four hundred head of cattle, and from which they are shipped, and carried by this vessel on her, return voyage to Trinidad, for the supply of beef to that island.

These cattle, all young bulls, driven in from the surrounding savannahs, where they are bred, in an almost wild state, are placed in this corral from which a narrow road runs down to the ship's side. Then ensues a lively scene. Pressed by the Peons on horseback behind, while an old and trained bull, kept especially for the purpose, walks in front of the herd, they push and jostle till they arrive at the narrow outlet. Here a crush occurs, those in the rear push forward, those in front try to get back, some twenty or thirty are driven over while the rest, maddened by their efforts, turn on the Peons and force their way into the open space.

Then all is gone over again, until the necessary number are on board, or until they cannot any longer be brought up to the passage.

In the latter case, a peon dismounts, and lasso in hand, boldly walks among them; selecting the most troublesome, he throws one end of his lasso, made of bulls hide over his horns, passes the other down to the ship, where it is attached to the windlass, and the wretched animal, every limb pushed forward in mute protest against this mode of progression, is positively wound down into the hold; others follow, until the Corral is at length cleared and the ship goes on her way. The men employed in this work are all daring and practised horsemen and well skilled in the use of the lasso, while their small but very active horses turn and twist and jump out of the way of the infuriated animals without in any way disturbing the seat of their riders.

After leaving Barrancas the river changes its aspect; the banks are further apart. Huge stoney bluffs appear, the land is more open while in the distance appear the mountains of Guyana, a lower spur or branch of the Great Chains of the Andes. Now, turning a sharp corner, we open a vast sheet of water, at the lower end of which appears in the distance, evidently some fortress. This is the famous fort built by Sir Walter Raleigh when that bold buccaneer forced his way up the Orinoco and proceeded to search for the land of El Dorado among the possessions of the Spaniards. Curiously enough, Raleigh and his followers, according to all traditions must in their attempted passage through the country have actually passed over the spot where now the greatest quantities of gold are procured. I mean the great mine of El Callao, and it was this journey

which, eventually, through the cowardice of James I., and his fear of the Spaniard, lost Raleigh his head. The proud Viceroy of South America never forgot or forgave the blow inflicted on his prestige and power by the bold Englishman, and Raleigh's blood<sup>1</sup> was needed to quiet the fears and satisfy the pride of the Spaniard whom he had so often defeated.

It is believed in the country that Raleigh and his followers buried great treasures in and around the fort, previous to their departure, but no one seems to have found any of them. The land round it for many miles is open, and of the most fertile nature, but without inhabitants, and I was assured that neither the government nor any other authority would interfere with any one who chose to take up his abode and help himself to as much land as he wanted, whether one or hundreds of acres, now lying waste. Passing Raleigh's fort we approached Las Tablas, a small town on the river's edge and at which persons visiting the mines, generally disembark, a process attended with some difficulty unless you have previously been to Cindad Bolivar and obtained a permit. Here we took in a few passengers and proceeded to Cindad Bolivar, which we reached on the afternoon of the second day after leaving Trinidad.

Our young sporting friend had, during the voyage, been extremely active with his rifle, but had not succeeded beyond frightening several large birds and alligators. He explained to me that the motion of the vessel rendered shooting with the rifle exceedingly

difficult and quite different to shooting on land, where you stood still and took your aim. As he assured me he was one of the crack shots of his regiment (volunteers) and was there relied on as capable of making a bulls eye when needed, I received his explanation with all the reliance which his experience seemed to guarantee.

It was in the evening of the second day of our voyage, shortly after sunset, that I saw a sight ever to be remembered. Darkness in these latitudes closely follows the setting of the sun, but the stars are so bright and the moonlight so clear that this time is generally chosen for a quiet lounge on deck. Suddenly at about a yard distance from the most eastern star of the southern cross, a meteor appeared falling, about the size of a plate, and of such a bright white color that moon and stars and all appeared suddenly to have been extinguished; for some seconds it lit up everything like the sun itself, while falling rapidly, then turned suddenly blood red and seemed to sink into the earth a short distance off. So close did it appear that for a minute every breath was held, waiting a final crash and explosion, but nothing more happened, and the night became again serene. I heard afterwards that a huge ærolite was supposed to have fallen near Caracas, some 5 or 600 miles away.

Cindad Bolivar, formerly known as St. Thomas de Angostura, the port of entry for the whole State of Guyana, to which every vessel arriving in the Orinoco is compelled to proceed, in order to clear, is an old

### 30 VENEZUELA : ITS MINERAL WEALTH.

Spanish town placed on a solid rock rising from a vast plain and close to the river side.

The town was originally started in 1575, was removed in 1764 to the present site, and in 1790 was called St. Thomas d'Angostura, or St. Thomas of the narrows.

After the freedom of the country from Spanish rule, the name was changed to Ciudad Bolivar, or the City of Bolivar. The bitters known as Angostura bitters were originally made here, but the manufacture has been removed to Trinidad without improving the article.

The Orinoco here is very narrow, and a spur of the same rock on which the town is built juts far into the stream, and renders navigation very unsafe, while the narrowness of the channel enables the town to command all the waterway. Inland, behind the town, are large lagoons so that it is practically unapproachable by any hostile force, if well defended. The rock rises very sharply and the houses seem piled one above the other, while their foundations and the streets running up to the top of the mound have been regularly blasted out of the solid rock. The little yards or gardens behind, without which no Spanish house is complete, have been brought into cultivation by earth brought in baskets from long distances.

The principal street, where the warehouses of the merchants are, faces, and runs parallel to the river; between it and the water, a long line of fine trees have been planted, affording a much desired shelter during the mid-day heats, which are terrific here. During our



stay the thermometer ranged from ninety-six to one hundred and twelve in the shade, without any breeze, except for about one hour at sunset, when it would blow a perfect gale and then die away altogether. Were it not for this evening breeze I think no human being could live there long. It was the hottest place I was ever in. The bare black rock on which it is built gets almost red hot at noon, and never at any time gets cool. It is said out there, that at the Creation, after the six days were over, the devil stole a mean advantage during the Sunday's rest, and threw up Cindad Bolivar as an outpost. The city received its present name in compliment to the great liberator, a fine bronze statue of whom stands in the public square, opposite the Cathedral.

Apropos of bronze statues, it is usual to erect one to any successful general, who for a time succeeds to power, but this is usually pulled down by his successor. A cute Yankee, therefore, who had a share in some American foundry where such things were generally cast, hit upon the idea of having moveable heads which could screw on or off, so that General Brown's statue of to-day would do for General Black to-morrow with a new head, and without any disturbance of the figure, and even proposed to keep a dozen or two of heads in stock to select from.

Almost all the houses are of the old Spanish type, one story, or, at most two high, with flat terraced roofs, and windows heavily barred, through which at eve the lover serenades and talks to his mistress ; generally white-washed, with a sort of dado or border, up to about three

feet from the ground, of some bright color—blue, green, or mauve, and at the back an enclosed yard or garden, where the family spend most of their time.

All the houses have large projecting balconies supported on posts, under which the pavement of the streets run, thus affording some shelter to the passenger, The women of the better class are seldom seen, except at early mass about 4 a.m. There are no walks or rides except up and down the principal street by the river side. All the country round is one dreary desert, either swamp and lagoon where Malaria reigns supreme, or else sandy Savannah where nothing but sand paper trees and coarse grass can grow. Yet in this miserable spot large fortunes are made by those who can endure it. The place is not unhealthy, it is merely hot. No other word can describe it. It is perpetually, and forever, Hot, Hotter, Hottest.

During the few days I was detained at Bolivar, a swarm of locusts passed over the town, absolutely, for some hours, obscuring the sun and turning day into twilight. After their passage, the streets were quite slippery with the droppings and the stench abominable. The trees along the river bank, under whose shade in the evening the exhausted inhabitants used to sit formerly, for the evening breeze, presented the appearance of being scorched by a fierce fire. All the buds and young leaves were destroyed, and the old ones brown and crumbly. These pests destroy almost every green thing in their forward march.

They have alarmingly increased during the last two years, and are fast eating up all the vegetation in the country. Luckily they do not like Savannah grass or sugar cane, nor do they much injure the cacao trees; but the cocoa, plantain, bread fruit, orange and lime trees are stripped of every leaf, and in many cases quite killed; even if they survive, it takes many months before they recover. As a consequence, fruit and vegetables are exceedingly scarce and dear, and the inhabitants rely principally on corn, bread stuffs, and potatoes from America, which are sold at enormous profits. The Spanish part of the population are Roman Catholics, and there is a Cathedral, but it is a plain building, without ornament, and the spire is very dwarfed, owing to the danger from earthquakes.

At the very summit of the rock on which the town stands, and placed so as to secure every puff of air, stands a very large plain building intended for a hospital. The building was commenced during the time the state of Guyana was governed by men selected from the old families of the province. The Dela Costas, for a long time governors, spent considerable sums of their own upon it, but after their ruin the building languished, and it was not until the directors of the great El Callao Mine, came forward with the magnificent donation of £15,000 that there seemed any chance of its completion. Now, however, it is being rapidly pushed on, and the town itself will no doubt contribute whatever more may be required to complete it. When finished it will prove an inestimable boon. Plain to ugliness outside, the

inside is especially designed for the comfort of the sick, and the question of ventilation and coolness has been particularly considered. The town is well supplied with water from the river. A steam engine and pumps having been erected, which forces it up to the highest parts, and it is laid on for several hours every day. It was at one time supplied from a reservoir erected on the top of the rock, but it was found that the water there bred mosquitos in millions, and the tank or reservoir system had to be given up. During the dry season the town is comparatively free from these pests, but in the wet time they swarm in myriads, and mosquito nets are a necessity at night, if sleep is to be hoped for. There are one or two sorts of mosquito in this country, especially venomous: one of a greenish yellow tint which, in addition to stinging and sucking one's blood, deposits a small egg at the bottom of the wound, from which in due course a worm or maggot is hatched, and this proceeds to bury itself in the flesh, growing to a very considerable size, and causing great pain. It requires a very experienced person to remove them, as, if broken they cause severe running sores, which last several months, and are very difficult to cure. Luckily this sort of mosquito is not very common, but I met several instances of persons suffering from their stings.

On landing at Cindad Bolivar, the traveller is met with the most troublesome Custom House restrictions and regulations. Until a permit is obtained, Custom House officers on board, and sentries duly placed at the gangways, no one is permitted to leave the ship,

and this, owing to the laziness or insolence of the lower officials, takes some hours.

Then every package or parcel has to be carried on shore and up to the Custom House by a soldier, who is entitled to a considerable sum for his services. There they must remain, for the presence of the chief, who attends for two or three hours only in the day. In his absence, nothing can be done, and it is very unwise to leave your luggage, even for a minute, out of your sight, it is so apt to disappear altogether. After every thing has been turned over, and flagrant attempts made to seize anything that appears new, the traveller is at last permitted to have his luggage taken to his hotel by another soldier at a fixed tariff. In my case the charge amounted to some £2 for a distance of less than 400 yards altogether. The employment of soldiers to land all goods at a specified tariff, is one of the means employed by government to pay them, as beyond this, they have little or nothing to depend on.

Goods and baggage could easily be landed and warehoused at a quarter of the price now charged, were it permitted to use one's own servants, or to select labourers, but this would compel the government to pay the soldiers, while at present they are at free quarters, living as it were on the merchants and travellers.

The hotel accommodation in Cindad Bolivar is very limited. You certainly can get a room in which to swing your hammock, and in some of them there is a canvas stretcher, a jug and basin, generally of iron, and

a cane chair. Your meals must be taken at regular hours (11 and 6) at a table d' hote, where the food is plentiful if not appetizing, but of privacy or quietness there is no chance.

An American captain, who on his return from Cindad Bolivar had been to a seance of spiritualists, on being asked his opinion, said that he fully believed in them, alleging that, when asked to say whom he wished to interview, he named his late first mate, who had died at Cindad Bolivar during the time the ship lay there. On the spirit answering in the usual manner, he enquired how he was getting on down below, to which the spirit replied, that he should feel greatly obliged if, when he came that way, he would bring with him his (the mate's) great coat, adding that after Bolivar the climate was less than temperate, and, said the captain, I knew it must be Bill's ghost that was speaking, for no one, who had not been to both places, would ever have been able to distinguish between them.

One of the arrangements at Cindad Bolivar, peculiar to this country and government, is to regulate the dispatch of the fortnightly steamer with the mails, to Trinidad so that it should arrive there the day after the Royal mail steamer leaves with the mail bags for the other Colonies, England and the Continent, and to make its return voyage to Cindad Bolivar from Trinidad, with letters, just one day before the mails can arrive from England, entailing on correspondents a loss of 12 or 14 days quite uselessly.

There is popularly supposed to be a telegraphic communication from Cindad Bolivar and some station in the Gulf of Para opposite Trinidad, but it is totally unreliable. When the wire is not broken, and the clerks happen to be in the offices, at both ends, at the same time (which seldom occurs), a message may pass through, but so terribly mangled and distorted that it is better not to send it at all. First, the clerk sending it, wants to know what it means and all about it, if he does not understand, he won't send it. Then the clerk at the other end requires similar enlightenment, so that, unless you can be put on the wire and accompany it to its destination, there is small chance of its arriving there in any intelligible form. Then, if it reaches the other end and all is pronounced correct, the clerk will most probably write his version of it in Spanish and send it across the bay by the first ship which may call there on its way to Trinidad : a very unfrequent occurrence. Your Trinidad correspondent, should it ever reach his hands, in despair of understanding its meaning, sends it on verbatim to (say) London, paying fourteen and three-pence per word for what, on its arrival, generally turns out to be nonsense, and is almost always considerably forestalled by the usual mail service. I need scarcely say that this line does not command much custom. The telegraph line to Caracas, on the contrary, is fairly reliable and in general use.

Facing Cindad Bolivar, on the other side of the river, is a small group of houses and plantations, called Soledad, and this is the point of departure by road to

Caracas. A ferry-boat crosses the Orinoco every half hour, and daily takes over the mails. The passage is somewhat dangerous, owing to sudden squalls, which burst with scarcely any notice, and last but a few minutes. During my short stay, the ferry-boat was twice upset by them, and on one occasion, all the mails were lost and the crew very nearly drowned. They were not rescued until they had gone down the river more than a mile, clinging to the keel of the overturned boat. A curious example of the despotism used by Government Officials occurred in connexion with the last upset. A German barque was loading up, and one of the officials ordered them to lower and send off a boat at once to the rescue. This, the Mate refused to do without orders from the Captain, who was on land somewhere. Without more ado, a file of soldiers was sent to arrest the Captain, who was taken, where he was dining with some friends, and, both he, the Mate, and all the crew together, with one or two people who happened to be on board the vessel at the time, were clapped into jail for the night. Next morning they were released and ordered to leave at once, and the ship had to sail in the morning, whether ready or not. No trial at all—it was simply an act of high-handed summary Justice on the part of the Governor, from which there was no appeal.



## CHAPTER III.



VENEZUELA was discovered by Christopher Columbus during his third voyage in 1498. In 1499, Ojeda sailing round the coast and entering the Bay of Maraccaibo, found all the native villages constructed on foundations of piles, driven into the swampy ground, and named the country Venezuela, or little Venice, from the likeness it presented to the construction of Venice. This adventurer, who merely went in quest of plunder, did not form any permanent establishment there.

The first colony (that of Coro) was founded in 1527, by Ampues. Soon afterwards the whole country was, by grant from the Spanish Court, made over to the Welsers, who were great barkers, and who undertook to form a company to colonize the country. Under the tyranny of this people the land languished till 1545, when the Emperor Charles, at last conscious of the dreadful oppression exercised by them, cancelled the grant, resumed possession of the country, and appointed Viceroys to govern it, and maintained this system until the colonists rose in rebellion, and in 1810, under General Miranda, declared the country an independent state.

The Viceroys, according to the custom of Spain with her colonies, looked upon their appointment merely as an opportunity to enrich themselves, and the most scandalous abuses were practised. Under the pretence of disloyalty the Indians were shot, enslaved, and destroyed wholesale. A pearl fishery of great value was discovered at the island of Margarita, but so excessive was the greed of the Spaniards, that by 1580 the pearl oyster was almost totally destroyed, and the fishery abandoned, while the bones of thousands of Indians who died there under the lash of their taskmasters, bore testimony to their utter heartlessness and cruelty in the pursuit of wealth.

During two centuries or more, the oyster beds have remained comparatively undisturbed, but in 1872 a Mr. Spence obtained a concession from the then government to enable him to prosecute the fishery. No great results however attended this attempt, and I believe it was subsequently abandoned.

The fishery is still carried on in a very small way, and occasionally pearls of great beauty from Margarita can be obtained at Caracas the capital, but the instability of successive Governments and the insecurity of property, joined to the apathy and laziness of the inhabitants render the embarkation of foreign Capital into commercial undertakings exceedingly hazardous. This is sufficiently indicated by the fact that the usual rate of interest in Venezuela for loans secured on either land, houses, or other property, is from  $1\frac{1}{2}$  to 2 per cent per month, or 18 to 24 per cent. per annum.

Juan Cornicho was the first of the Spanish adventurers who attempted to pass up the Orinoco. This voyage was made in 1531 during the period when the country was under the control of the Welsers.

The chief source of the Orinoco, as far as known, is in Guyana south west of the range of mountains known as the Sierra Parima. One part of the river known as the Cassaquiau runs south west to the Rio Negro and thus connects the Orinoco with the Amazon. The highest mountain on the Sierra Parima range is called Maraguaca, and rises 8000 feet above sea level. The chief rivers in Guyana besides the Orinoco, are the Guairari, Meta, Caroni, Cayuni, Apure, Yuruari, and Rio Negro.

That part of Venezuela on the south bank of the Orinoco is known as the state of Guyana, a general name for all the country between the Orinoco and the Amazon, and derived from the Indian word Guainia, which was the Marsitan name for the Rio Negro. At the time of the first Spanish expedition this country was well populated by many tribes of Indians, who hospitably received and entertained them; kindnesses generally acknowledged by either slavery or torture, to induce them to discover to the greedy Spaniard the fabled El Dorado. After Cornicho several other Spaniards made attempts from various points to reach the reputed kingdom of Guyana with its fabulous capital, but all failed to reach Guyana itself.

Orellano was employed by Pizarro, the conqueror of Peru, to search for Guyana, where it was supposed the family of the unfortunate Inca Mata Calpa had retired, and it was long believed that, accompanied by a vast number of Peruvians, they had retreated through the swamps on the banks of the Amazon and settled themselves in the country beyond. There is some foundation for belief in this migration, if the stories told by the Indians of the Orinoco to Raleigh can be trusted, as they speak of a race coming from the direction of the Amazon evidently more civilized than themselves, who were at that time driving them away from that part of their territory furthest from the Orinoco, and extending towards the Amazon. Be that as it may, Orellano did not succeed in finding them.

After him, Pedro d' Orsua attempted to reach Guyana from Peru, but after passing down the Amazon he was murdered by one of his own soldiers named Aguerra near the mouth of that river. Aguerra, after the death of d' Orsua, assumed the command of the expedition, and embarking at the mouth of the Amazon, sailed for Margarita, which he plundered and burnt, putting the governor and garrison to the sword. From thence he pushed on to Cumdua, which he treated in a similar manner, and became one of the most notorious and dreaded pirates and plunderers on the Spanish Main. At last, being defeated at Neuvo Regno de Granada and in danger of falling into the hands of the authorities, he put his wife and children to death with his own hand, declaring, that as he could not have them honored and

respected, it was better for them to die, than live to be branded as the offspring of a pirate. He then put an end to his own existence, and relieved the country from one of the worst of its oppressors. Sir John Hawkins states that he heard during one of his voyages to those seas of the cruelties of this monster. Don Antonio Borreo, governor of Trinidad at the date of Raleigh's voyage to Guyana, had also made an attempt to penetrate the country from Columbia or Grenada with 1,000 men, but after months of privation and the loss of nearly all his force, he was compelled to abandon the enterprise. His son afterwards made another attempt up the Orinoco, but was enticed by the Indians into the country and signally defeated with the loss of 300 men.

It was while Borreo was governor of Trinidad, that Sir Walter Raleigh started on his first voyage to Guyana in 1594. On his arrival at Trinidad, after passing through the Boca del Serpente he reached the bottom of the Gulf of Paria, and the city called Port of Spain; here, being treacherously treated by the Spaniards, he took the town by storm, after defeating the governor Borreo. There is a general belief, both in Venezuela and Trinidad that Raleigh had him flogged in the open market place. Sir Walter himself says nothing of this, but merely adds to his account of the capture, that he treated him according to his deserts.

Borreo tried his utmost to prevent the expedition from going up the Orinoco, pointing out the great danger attending the navigation, and the hostility of the

Indians on the banks, that they used poisoned arrows, against which there was no remedy, and that the climate was deadly to Europeans. Sir Walter, however, was not to be deterred, and after trying in vain to find an opening sufficient for his ships to pass through, at length proceeded in pinnaces and barges, leaving the larger ships anchored at the mouth of the river.

There is a considerable difference in the accounts given of Raleigh's proceedings. He appears to have pushed up the river as far as the spot where the Caroni joins it, and to have visited the falls in that river, which are some of the finest in the world. He also caused to be attacked and burnt, the Spanish town of St. Thomè. This cannot be St. Thomè d' Angostura, but probably refers to a town situated lower down the river than the Caroni falls. Most probably, where a fort still stands, called, indifferently, Raleigh's, or, the Pirates' Fort. There is no town there now ; nothing but a rich desolate country. If this was not the place, then it was at the spot where the town of Las Tablas now stands, but I incline to the former place. Report says that treasure was buried by him there, but, although long searched for, none has ever been discovered. It was here that his son met with his death during the storming of the town. This expedition was under the command of Captain Keymis, who killed himself shortly after its return to the ships. The expedition can be distinctly traced to have proceeded by land as far as Upata, and probably, as far as the spot where the valuable mines of El Callao are now producing fabulous quantities of gold. There

seems to have been some intention to push on to where the rivers flowed into the Amazon. A very probable determination in the then unknown state of the course of the two great rivers.

Raleigh mentions, again and again, that he saw gold embedded in white quartz, and it is singular that it is white quartz which produces most of the gold of El Callao, whereas in other mines, the gold bearing lodes are blue. At last however, the expedition seems to have regained the boats and then returned down the Orinoco, it being impossible to pass further up, owing to the rainy season and the heavy floods. Whether on his passage up or down, he certainly landed at Barrancas on the right bank, for cattle, and Barrancas remains to this day as a place where large quantities of cattle are shipped for export.

From Raleigh's history we learn that there must have been many towns and a large population, at that time, on and about the delta of the Orinoco. Now all is silent and deserted.

Raleigh is still spoken of in Venezuela as one of the English pirates, and when his death was resolved on by the Spanish Court, the Ambassador, Gondemar, who was ordered to complain to James the First, on his Audience with that Monarch, only said one word, crying Piratas, Piratas, Piratas, and abruptly left the presence. Raleigh's execution followed shortly after.

The few Indians still found there, belong to the tribe of Gouranis. Gouaraona being an Indian name, indicating the mouth of the river. After Raleigh's expedition, although he repeatedly called the attention of the English Government to the great advantages to be gained by the occupation and colonization of Guyana, nothing appears to have been done until 1797, when Trinidad was taken by the British under Sir Ralph Abercromby and Admiral Harvey.

During all this time, the Spaniards had gradually overrun the country, destroying or amalgamating with the Indians, and various missions were established throughout Guayana by the Capuchins and Jesuits, who seem to have greatly encouraged agriculture and cattle breeding.

In 1797 there were 38 of these missions in various parts, from the mouth of the Caroni, as far as the rivers Imataca and Cuyuni, surrounded generally by a population of one or two thousand Indians, who were employed by the Spaniards, in the cultivation of cacao, coffee, maize, vanilla, tobacco, and other products, and also as peons at their cattle breeding establishments.

Traces of this old civilization are numerous at the present day, although the plantations are ruined and overgrown, and the great cattle establishments destroyed. How this happened I shall presently point out. The present Capital of Venezuela is Caracas. This was founded 1565, by Diego Lozada. It is situated in the Valley of Arragon, 3,000 feet above the level of the sea,



in latitude 10°30', and 67° west longitude. Five leagues from Caracas, on the coast is, La Guyra, the port of the capital. The bay is open to all winds, and in stormy weather the anchorage is very unsafe. Between it and the Capital rises a mountain 4,000 feet high, which has to be crossed. Formerly all the traffic between Caracas and La Guyra was by means of mules and oxen, and the rate of carriage over a very rough road was extortionate. In 1872 Gusman Blanco, the president, succeeded in getting sufficient capital subscribed in Europe, and after one or two failures, a railway was at length constructed from La Guyra to Caracas, but owing to the mountainous nature of the country, it had to take a very circuitous route, and is between 25 and 30 miles long. A minimum interest on the capital of 5 per cent. is guaranteed by the Government, and I understand that the line is now fairly remunerative. There is a story told that at first the undertaking looked like proving a failure, owing to the old Road Carriers reducing their charges to a level with those of the new railway, and as in Venezuela, like Spain, there is a great dislike to innovations, it seemed likely that on their amended tariff, they would retain the greater part of the goods traffic.

The President, however, was quite equal to the occasion. He called a meeting of all the principal carriers and addressed them, pointing out that he had, at great personal inconvenience, succeeded in inducing foreign powers to embark capital in an undertaking which was calculated to benefit largely the state of Venezuela.

That if their first venture proved unremunerative it was very unlikely that any more foreign capital would come there, which would be a great blow to their prosperity; that the Government had guaranteed a certain rate of interest, and if that was not earned by the road it must come out of the pockets of the Venezuelans. That the maintenance of the railway was for the good of the country, and consequently those who opposed it were enemies to their country, and that he, then and there, issued a decree that any person opposing the railway by offering to carry goods at rates calculated to injure them, were injuring the Government, and if they persevered in that course they should be imprisoned forthwith.

Within a week of this address all traffic on the old road had ceased, and with the exception of a solitary traveller now and then who prefers to ride his own mule, everything and everybody goes by rail.

The penalty of death is now abolished in Venezuela, but at La Guyra there still exist some dungeons below the sea and swamp levels, where the worst criminals are ordered to be incarcerated, and I believe a week or two generally terminates their sufferings. They are, however, very seldom used.

It is curious to note this tenderness towards murderers and felons in a people who, during their revolutionary war, have carried sanguinary ferocity to its highest pitch. Wholesale shooting of political enemies being the rule, rather than the exception, and instances are

frequent, of large bodies of prisoners being shot down after surrender. The mixture of Spanish and Indian blood appears to produce a naturally ferocious breed, holding the vices of both races and the virtues of neither ; nor does the introduction of German or Corsican blood seem to improve matters much.

A peculiar race called Zamboes, a combination of the imported African slaves with some of the original Carib Indians, has produced a breed, which, even in Venezuela, is looked on as singularly ferocious, and out of ten crimes committed, at least eight are attributed, and with reason, to Zamboes. During the wars, they have proved the most cruel and bloodthirsty of all troops, neither taking nor giving quarter, and have fairly outrivalled, in that respect, the Llaneros, or men of the plains.

The constant changes of presidents, and, consequently, the very unsettled state of the country and insecurity of property, have been the great drawbacks to the prosperity of Venezuela. The present president, General Gusman Blanco, seems to have had a longer lease of power, and to have got a firmer hold on the people, than any of their former governors. By an article in the constitution, the president is only elected for two years, and the same person cannot hold two consecutive terms of office, therefore between General Blanco's presidencies there have been a succession of warming pans as it were, he returning to power as soon as the law permitted, and the retiring presidents falling back into their native obscurity, but each one while in power did all he could to fill his own pockets and those of the needy set of

adventurers who surrounded him. Nor has General Blanco, with all his power, and, I believe, a sincere desire to benefit his country, been able to check this. He is himself a very wealthy man, has great self-reliance, and a firm belief in the future of his country, but the system is beyond his power to overthrow.

When Bolivar freed Venezuela he gave (as the only reward possible) the country among those who had freed it. That is, the generals all applied for something,—grants of land, special powers to trade, &c., &c., and this precedent has been followed up in all succeeding wars and revolutions, so that now there is scarcely anything in Venezuela that is not the subject of a concession or monopoly. If you are a breeder of cattle, you find on trying to ship them, that one general has the sole right to export cattle out of Venezuela, so that you will have to pay him four dollars a head for every one you ship. If you seek to avoid this by killing or selling in the country another general turns up, who has the sole right to slaughter cattle in the country, and he levies five dollars a head for leave to kill your own beasts. One general (they are all generals) has the sole right to import one article, another the sole right to export another. None of these worthies have really anything to export or import, but they sell these privileges to German houses in trade, who, even after paying very large sums to them, manage to make an enormous profit, but the trade of the country is crushed and ruined. Foreign sugars and salt are prohibited, to protect industries monopolised by certain favored individuals.

Everything, in fact, is done by concession, and to obtain these advantages over trade rivals, very large sums are constantly paid to the various ministers, through whose influence such can be obtained.

I will mention one instance. Tonquin beans are largely exported from Venezuela.

The bean grows wild in certain districts, and used to be collected by the natives, and brought down to the various merchants in Cindad Bolivar, who bought them up and shipped them to America, making a considerable profit, and a large general trade was done in the article, which gave employment to a great number of people.

However, one General, scenting plunder, applied for, and got, a concession, appointing him as the sole person authorized to gather, sell, or export Tonquin beans. The merchants of Cindad Bolivar, seeing a very considerable trade slipping from their grasp, met and presented a respectful petition to the then President, asking him to abolish this concession, on the ground that it was a great injury to trade.

What was the answer ? The Governor of Bolivar called a meeting of the merchants who had signed the memorial, which they all attended, except one wary old fox, who suddenly became unwell, and went down to Trinidad for his health. On reaching the Government house, they were informed that the President had read their memorial, that he considered it as inimical to the Government, and that he, the Governor, was directed to give them a fortnight's confinement in prison, to

reconsider the matter ; and imprisoned they were accordingly. No further memorials reached the President from them, and now one German house in Bolivar, has, by paying a large sum yearly to the concession holder, obtained the privilege of collecting and exporting all Tonquin beans. The people, who collect them, have to pay for leave to do so, they must bring them to this house, who buys at their own price, and fearing no competition, sells or holds back, as the foreign markets suit them. The average amount of duties, paid by merchants on their imports, is 45 per cent. According to law, certain articles are free of duty, but against the clause a rider is attached "by consent of the Minister," and this consent is never obtained without a considerable bribe. Trinidad occupies, towards Venezuela, something like the position of Great Britain towards the continent of Europe, in one respect ; it is a refuge for all disaffected, Venezuelans ; here conspiracies are hatched, and expeditions fitted out, and here the discomfited parties return after failure, sure of a secure shelter. Venezuelan Generals abound in Port of Spain, the capital, and most of these worthies, are not above accepting a dollar or a dinner from any one who will offer it.

Trinidad is, therefore, not looked upon favorably by the Venezuelan Government, and an extra duty of 30 % is levied on every article coming therefrom, or on the cargo of any ship clearing from there.


Again, Cindad Bolivar, the commercial capital and largest town in Guyana is made the only port of entry. The principal import trade now of Guyana is for the

supply of the mining district, and the direct route to the mines, and the interior, starts, not from Cindad Bolivar, but from Las Tablas (100 miles nearer the mouth of the Orinoco); but Las Tablas must be passed ; the ship must unload, and land all her goods at Cindad Bolivar and pay duties on all, and then re-ship them and take them back to Las Tablas, re-land them there, and again pass them through the Las Tablas Custom House, before they can be forwarded inland. Is it any wonder, then, that goods costing originally ten pounds fetch from one to two hundred at the mines.

All house dues, all taxes, all rents to Government, the stamps on all papers (and every piece of paper on which any transaction is written must carry a stamp, the lowest of which is a franc, and each page or sheet must be similarly stamped, otherwise the whole transaction is illegal), must be paid in gold, and all the gold so paid is sent direct to Caracas.



## CHAPTER IV.

HERE are no banks in Venezuela, so all money in payment of taxes, mine dues, &c., is remitted in specie to Caracas, and the singular spectacle is presented of a province comprising one half of the republic periodically drained of its gold, while foreign Companies have to send out gold to pay their workmen, and so replace the continuous drain. Up to the present time no duty has been levied on the importion of specie, but no one knows what the Government may do. Banks, with powers to coin and issue money, have been started, but it was found that the money issued by them was so adulterated that no one would take it. Indeed there is one case of an individual having obtained a concession to coin and issue spurious money, or at least in so adulterated a condition as to be practically valueless. This clever person proceeded to issue coins forthwith, which were accepted unsuspectingly by every one, until the province was fully supplied, but this coin, when paid into the Government coffers for taxes, fines, dues, &c., and sent to Caracas, was refused, and returned to the persons who had tendered it, and when complaints were made, orders came down to arrest the issuer as a forger. He was duly seized and sent on to Caracas, but, on arrival there, it appeared that he had some other concession to carry out, for



which, periodical visits to Trinidad were necessary, and, in compliance with this, he was permitted to go there. It is needless to say that once out of the country, he did not return. Similar instances of fraud, oppression, and injustice might be quoted by the hundred, in all which, the officials participate largely. Meanwhile discontent is rife all through Guyana, the state is being beggared, the old families ruined. Men are sent from Caracas to fill all posts, and are constantly being changed, very inadequate pay is given, and it is notorious that all officials accept bribes, to the perversion of justice. A tax is levied on every inhabitant for the maintenance of the roads, but not one penny is ever spent on them. All the money is sent up to Caracas, and the only attention the so-called roads ever get, is the labour of any prisoners that may be on hand in jail, and this only round the towns.

Every one in Guyana was looking forward to General Gusman's re-accession to office and return to Venezuela as a time when many of these crying evils would be remedied. If he fails to satisfy them I fancy another revolution is imminent, and I should not be at all surprised to see Guyana constitute itself into a separate republic, divided from Venezuela by the Orinoco.

As to the mining district that lies within the water-shed of the Essequibo, I have traced the course of its affluents, and can affirm positively, that by treaty all the water-shed of the Essequibo belongs to England. The intervention of such a great belt of virgin forest,

and the uncertainty of what the land was worth prevented us at the time from urging our claims with any persistency ; but the gold fever has at last spread to Demerara. Overseers from various estates are proceeding with large bodies of labourers to prospect in this virgin forest, and to push forward towards the present mining district. All the hills abound in gold, and mining discoveries of great value will be made.

The old Dutch navigators passed up the Essequibo and its affluents, to within 60 miles of El Callao, and this waterway can again be opened out. Everything could pass up this channel, thus avoiding the great round by Bolivar, as well as the vexatious delays and exorbitant exactions of its Custom House. The present population of the mines is principally composed of English subjects, and all would hail gladly, and support energetically, a union with British Guyana, or an independant state with free trade. If this country is opened up as Australia was, and similarly populated with an English speaking race, the Government will be forced to interfere for the protection of its {own subjects. Nor will the trickery and falseness displayed by the Venezuelan Government towards the English bondholders be forgotten. They have no claim whatever to our forbearance. The miners have already on one occasion been brought into contact with the executive (see Consul Reddan's report), and, but for the incapacity and cowardice of their leader, who first provoked the outbreak, they could successfully have resisted all interference.

With a road open from Demerara, whence supplies and stores could be brought, Guyana, or for that matter the mining district only, could defy all the forces the Government of Venezuela could bring against them. There is only one gun-boat to guard the Orinoco, and that is so shaky that if the one gun on it was fired the whole lot would go to the bottom.

All the countless herds of cattle, horses, and asses, so eloquently described by writers of forty years ago have disappeared from the plains. In a ride of 250 miles over them, I never saw two horses, or asses together, or more than five or six head of cattle. It was on these that the combatants in former wars relied, to feed and convey their armies, but they are gone, and on these vast plains without a population, or any cultivation, no large body of men could be moved without the most complete equipment of stores, provisions, baggage, and ammunition beasts, which are not obtainable now. There are navigable rivers to cross, and no bridges. It is difficult enough now for the simple traveller, in the face of opposition it would be almost impossible. Guns cannot be moved without horses, and even of light guns, such as would be required in that country, the Government have none, and no money to buy any. Even the Custom House revenues are mortgaged to some 80 % of their returns, and all other taxes are nearly in the same position.

The mining code of Venezuela signed at Caracas on May 21st, 1885, by Joaquim Crespo, as President, and the

Ministers, is full of pitfalls. It sets out that no mine can be worked unless an act of concession has been issued by the Federal Government, after all formalities prescribed by the act have been complied with. No concession can be for more than 99 years, or less than 50, but holders will have a preferential claim for renewal.

The form of grant is as follows :

“THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC.

Whereas it appears that (M. or N.) has petitioned the Government for the concession of ——— Mines, of the dimensions determined by Art. 4 of the Law, the boundaries thereof being according to the respective plan as follows ; ——— and considering that the requisite explorations, measurements, demarkation, and other corresponding acts have been performed, so far as to have obtained a grant, declares, with the affirmation vote of the Federal Council, in favour of (M. or N.) his heirs and assigns, the concession of ——— Mines in the State (or Territory ——— District ———) to which the documents already examined and marked No.—— refer. The present title deed will be registered at the registry of the place where the Mines granted are situated, and it entitles the grantee and his heirs to make use, and have the enjoyment, of said Mines for a term of ——— years, while he complies with the conditions prescribed in Articles 28, 29, 35, and 37 of the already mentioned decree.”

Art. 26 says : The deed of concession *shall* be registered in the Registry of the place where the Mine or Mines are situated.

Art. 28 says: The Grantee must begin the working of the Mines within two years from date of concession.

Art. 29: Should the term expire before working has begun *the title shall be forfeited.*

Art. 35: From the date on which a concession of Mines is issued, the holder shall pay annually a further sum of 750 francs for each five stamp mill employed, and these taxes shall be paid in cash each quarter in advance, and the omission to pay for two consecutive quarters renders the grant void by Art. 39. All Mining documents must be in triplicate, one to be at the Ministry of Progress, one at the Registry where the title is registered, and the third to be placed with original title in the hands of the Grantee, and copies of all such documents can always be obtained at the Registry. If the titles are transferred, the Federal Executive must be informed thereof, and the purchaser shall pay four francs for each mina of  $2\frac{1}{4}$  acres, that is so transferred. All fractions to be counted as full minas.

As soon as the Grantees have opened the paths round their grant according to law they must give notice to the Inspector of Mines, who is entitled to a fee of one franc per mina for examining same, to be paid by the grantee. The boundaries must be cleared once every year, and the Grantees who fail shall pay a fine of 500 francs. (*For Full Mining Laws, see Appendix B.*)

It will be seen by the foregoing that the so-called Code of Mines is merely an act to get as much as possible, at

every opportunity, out of the holders of the Mines, quite regardless of the difference of value. El Callao, with an income of thousands per month, pays the same as Callao Bis, with no income at all.

The evil results of this mode of legislation have become so apparent that the Minister of War made a visit to, and inspection of the mining district in Guyana. (*For his Report, see Appendix A.*)

But the whole thing was a farce, enacted to enable Consuls and others to report to their various Governments. Nothing has been done, and the report, after having answered its purpose, is quietly shelved.

Meantime, the mining community, impoverished by exactions, and starved by the enormous Customs dues levied on supplies, and the total neglect of all sanitary measures, or even the most necessary repairs of the public roads, by the Government, and finding themselves continually mulcted in fines for every petty offence, to enable the Government officials to live, (their salaries being almost nominal, and their very existence depending on fees and fines, which they pocket) are becoming daily more discontented, and there is a great opportunity for the new President, General Gusman Blanco to gain the affections of his people, and render his name honored and his Government respected, by an entire revisal and correction of the fraud and injustice now rampant in Guyana.

One of the principal contributories to the Essequibo is the Cuyuni. This rises in Guyana, the greater part of the country is drained by it and its affluent the Masarryony. It is claimed by England as it terminates in the Essequibo. Its course is 620 miles, of which more than 400 are navigable.



## CHAPTER V.



THE mode of treatment adopted by Spain towards her colonies in South America, must, sooner or later, have driven them into rebellion and separation.

At first, groups of Spanish adventurers overran the country, then the leader obtained a patent from Spain, naming him Governor or Viceroy; he divided the country among his followers, who all did their level best to destroy the native population, by the greatest oppression and cruelty. These original conquerors settled in the country, and gradually mixed with the remaining Indians, in many instances marrying the daughters of Indian Chiefs, and so setting up some original claim to the land. Fresh bands of adventurers succeeded these, and pursued the same course, till at last there were, and still are, numerous old families, bearing the greatest of old Spanish names, with almost pure Indian blood in their veins.

In the course of time, the great Spanish families, from whom these adventurers came, were superseded in power by others, and new Viceroys, Governors, and State Officials were appointed, who ousted the old ones. These, becoming then settlers in the country, were gradually treated by the latest comers, exactly like any



other natives. This policy at last culminated in the appointment, for one, two or three years, of needy aristocrats to all great governmental posts, who during the term of their administration, only endeavoured to enrich themselves, regardless of the oppression exercised over their subjects, whether Spanish, Indian or half-breeds. The colonies were, in fact, the goose that laid for Spain golden eggs, but when at last she wanted two eggs in one day, then the goose struck work, and resolved in future to lay eggs for herself.

Viceroy of all sorts were sent out, from Pizarro downwards, to South America, some good, some bad, some severe, others liberal, but although the men often changed, the system never did.

During all this time, great settlements or missions as they were called, were formed by different orders of the Roman Catholic Priesthood, and it seems on the whole, that the Indians had less to complain of (except in respect of heresy), under these, than under any other masters. Consequently the missions flourished greatly. Towns sprang up around them, and the population, relying on the protection of the Reverend Fathers, with whom the Government seldom liked to interfere, devoted itself to agriculture, and the land blossomed forth with its fruits.

Cattle, horses and mules, brought originally by the Spaniards, increased prodigiously, and roamed over the open savannah in vast herds, while the Indians brought their crops of coffee, cocoa, vanilla, tobacco and sugar

to the Holy Fathers, who, purchasing them at their own price, realized large profits by their shipment to Europe. In 1797 the first attempt at disunion from Spain was made by three state prisoners who had been condemned for life to the prisons of La Guyra.

This was termed the Conspiracy of La Guyra. The two prime movers, on its discovery by the Government, made their escape, these were Grail and Espana; but of the remainder who had joined them seven were executed, some were sent to the galleys, others imprisoned, and some sent to Spain to be disposed of at the discretion of the King.

Again, General Miranda, on the 2nd of August, 1806, landed at Coro with about 500 men, and captured the City, but owing to the smallness of his force was eventually compelled to abandon his enterprise and return to Trinidad. Owing to the dissensions in Spain, consequent on its occupation by the French, frequent disputes arose between the Creoles and their Viceroy, and the spirit of discontent growing gradually stronger, through the want of protection afforded to the Colonies against the intolerable oppressions they were labouring under, the inhabitants of Caracas, perceiving that the Captain General Emparan was determined to enforce implicit obedience to all orders coming from Spain, appointed Deputies, who, on the 19th April, 1810, assumed the reins of Government. They decreed that the tribute paid by Indians and the slave trade should be abolished, and freedom of commerce established.

I would note here, that previous to the year 1800 the Spaniards had, owing to the scarcity of Indian labor through their cruelty, imported more than 20,000 Africans into Venezuela.

General Miranda, now determined to make another effort for the independence of his country, reached Caracas in the early part of 1811; on the 5th July in the same year Venezuela was declared independent, and on the 23rd December published the New Constitution.

On the 26th of March, 1812 a dreadful earthquake laid nearly every town in ruins; 20,000 people perished, producing much dismay and terror. The priests pronounced it a judgment upon them for the revolution, and, owing to the superstitious belief of the people, the Government fell into discredit.

Miranda was appointed dictator, but could offer little resistance to Monteverde, who commanded the Spanish Imperial forces. At length a convention was concluded, and Miranda being taken prisoner, was thrown into the prison of La Guyra, but, being released at the intercession of some British officers, he was sent to Cadiz, where he died in prison.

The seizure and imprisonment of Miranda was effected by Simon Bolivar, afterwards the Liberator of Venezuela, who suspected him of treachery, but there are no proofs. All Venezuela again came under the power of the Spaniards, whose deeds of ferocity and plunder exceeded all their former efforts. The almost

incredible cruelties of Monteverde at length roused the inhabitants to resistance, and Don Marino raised the standard of revolt, capturing Maturin. Bolivar shortly afterwards joined him with 2,000 men, the whole country rose and joined Bolivar, who advanced rapidly on Caracas. Now began the war to the death. The date of the Manifesto is June 8th, 1813. In 1815, Morillo arrived from Spain with 12,000 Spanish troops, and Bolivar, overwhelmed, retired to Jamaica, while Morillo overran the whole country, burning, shooting and torturing in true Spanish fashion.

In 1816, a revolt again broke out, in the Island of Margarita. On the 11th April, 1817, Pear, a mulatto who was afterwards shot for treason, defeated the Spaniards near Angostura. Paez also gained a battle near San Fernando.

Angostura, after being blockaded for 3 months surrendered on 17th July in the same year.

On the 15th February, 1819, the Congress of Venezuela was installed. The first President of the Congress was appointed; Bolivar was declared President of the Republic. In November, 1820, Morillo returned to Spain, leaving General La Torre in command. Before leaving the country, when accused of his repeated acts of cruelty, he replied "If I had completely carried out the orders and instructions received from the Government of Spain, this country would be an uninhabited desert."

On 24th June, 1821, La Torre was totally defeated by

Bolivar at Carabobo, with a loss of 6,000 men. The victory was principally due to the intrepidity and firmness displayed by the English and Irish volunteer contingent, and this battle virtually ended the war. Bolivar had 6,000 men, and the Spaniard 9,000 in this action. On August 20th, 1821, a Republican Constitution was drawn up and adopted.

During this War of Independence, nearly a quarter of a million lives were sacrificed, and the country, once well populated, was left almost a desert, nor has it ever recovered its former prosperity.

After much internal dissension, Paez became President of Venezuela.

The Government is central, the legislative body being invested with the power of making laws on all subjects. Each province sends two members to the Senate, which consists of 26, and the House of Representatives of 42. There is an election every two years. Executive power is vested in the President, who is chosen for two years.

The principal desideratum for Venezuelan prosperity seems to be an active, industrious and enterprising population, and I fear this will never be found among the Spaniards, or their descendants, who are lazy, proud and careless.

On the occasion of the meeting of a general committee, to declare the Constitution, in 1830, they were addressed by Bolivar, in a speech, which must for ever remain the admiration of all true patriots. The illustrious leader

said, "I wish that all Europe and America knew the horror I feel at irresponsible power, under whatever name it is exercised. I am taunted with aspiring to tyranny. Set me, I beseech you, beyond the reach of that censure. If you persist in electing me, the State is ruined ; give to another the Presidency, which I now respectfully abdicate." He then took leave of public life, retiring to Carthagena, where broken down in mind and body, he died in December of the same year. Since that time various chiefs, contending with each other for supremacy, have kept up a succession of intestine wars, which have continually agitated and torn to pieces the whole country, almost depopulating some parts of it. Ruler succeeded ruler, with lightning rapidity, and with very few exceptions, each one was worse than his predecessor. All holdings of property were insecure, and it is doubtful whether the lower classes were not better off under Spanish cruelty, than they are under the monstrous exactions they suffer under the name of taxation, and the total want of justice, owing to the venality of the judges.

The commerce of Venezuela declined greatly during the War of Independence, the convulsions of society having greatly interfered with cultivation. But at first, as society became more settled, it began to revive.

How a state, gifted with one of the best codes of law in existence could, through the utter depravity, greed and cruelty of successive chiefs, have fallen into its present state, it is not within the scope of the present work to say. Enough, that from its liberation to the present

time, every successive President seems to have been employed, during his short lease of power, in trying to enrich himself and his adherents, without the least consideration for his unfortunate country. On paper all the laws are perfect, and the constitution all that could be desired, but experience has shown, that the influence of the executive power is able to subdue and absorb every other power, legislative or judicial.

One law which the Congress passed viz :—that of division of the National property among the defenders of the country, as the only way of rewarding their heroic services, has become a precedent of very bad import. At first, those who had risen, and driven out the Spaniards, divided the land among themselves, but as successive Generals strove for and gained the Presidency, they again forfeited the property of the opposing party, and divided their possessions among their own followers, and this plan of proceeding being found the easiest way of satisfying the greed of their adherents, it was resorted to without scruple. Then another party rose to power, and during their short holding, the same process was again resorted to ; a venal and subservant House of Representatives always agreeing with the Dictator for the time being, so that at last successive holders, all having titles of one sort or another, had rival claims to every bit of property in the country. These rival claims rendered the title to all property insecure, what was one man's to sell to-day, became to-morrow under another President, somebody else's, and the innocent purchaser was plunged into interminable law suits, and could only

hold possession as long as his purse held out, the judges being as venal as the assembly. Paez, Vargas, Paez.

Zea, Soublette, Paez, Gil, Monagas, Falcon, Monagas, Polidor, Pulgar, Blanco, Linares, Blanco, Crespo, and again Blanco, have succeeded each other with marvellous rapidity, the principal occupation of the deposed President, being to conspire against his successor. Some of them succeeded to power more than once, but Don Gusman Blanco alone, since Bolivar, seems to have got a firm hold of the Government, and although by the letter of the Constitution, he can only hold power for two years at a time, and cannot possibly hold two terms consecutively, yet the intervening Presidents were little more than dummies to keep his seat warm, General Pulgar, indeed, has shown decided hostility, and on more than one occasion, has broken out into armed rebellion, but hitherto his attempts have been put down, either by force or by negociation, and at present Don Gusman Blanco is supreme.

He is reported to be immensely wealthy, and is a man of great capacity and intelligence. Since his election in March last, he has not returned to Venezuela. One of his daughters was recently married to the Duke de Morny, in Paris. Don Gusman's presence in Venezuela is anxiously looked for.

The Venezuelan loan, contracted in Europe in 1864, amounting to twelve millions, secured on the Customs receipts, and for the express purpose of road making, and developing the agricultural resources of the country,



is a very sore subject to British investors. Certain it is that no part of it was applied as proposed, and indeed the greater part of what reached the country, after being plundered by the original wire pullers, was openly and shamelessly divided among the chiefs of the party then in power, under various pretexts. Nor have the Customs receipts, hypothicated for the payment of dividends, ever been so applied. Negotiations with such a Government are utterly useless. Diplomacy is powerless with men, who, while stickling for the point of honor, lie without scruple, and cheat, whenever it serves their purpose. Without arms, or men to use them, all their defences in ruins, and relying solely on the forbearance of their victims, they talk and swagger with the insolence of a first-class power, and if justice is ever to be obtained for their victims, it will only be obtained by an ultimatum, and the presence of a gunboat at La Guyra, or on the Orinoco. Then, all that is required will be granted without a murmur, and so long as a force is kept there, payments will be regularly made, promises to any extent given, and with the withdrawal of material pressure, they will be immediately broken as before.

A permanent British resident at Caracas, supported by a sufficient naval force, as required, is the only way to ensure the payment of the bondholders.

At present they are openly laughed at, and their claims derided, and those that now, after the long experience they have had of South American duplicity, enter into any further negotiations, thinking to save any

of their property by further advances, deserve to lose every shilling.

Let us hope that a firm Government in England will at least protect the lives and property of the numerous Englishmen, now employed in the mines and elsewhere, and that the unfair and unjust exactions of the Venezuelan Government will be firmly resisted.

The great influx of English subjects from Jamaica, and the other islands, and now, the persistent pressing forward of prospectors, in large numbers from Demerara will in time compel the English Government to take active steps to protect their own subjects, and to enforce their treaty rights.



CHAPTER VI.



VENEZUELA is bounded on the North by the Carribean Sea, and on this sea board is situated the capital Caracas, with its port La Guyra.

It is bounded on the West by New Grenada, on the South by Brazil, and on the East by Brazil, English Guyana, and the Atlantic.

The whole area of the Republic is about 440,000 square miles, or more than twice the size of France.

What the population now is, it is impossible to say, in 1875 it was about 2,000,000.

One half of the Republic is comprised in the State of Guyana, which by a recent edict is now incorporated in some way with Caracas, so as to render legal the absorption of the taxes &c., collected and sent there.

This State extends 650 miles North and South, and 700 East and West, and is bounded on the South by Brazil, North by the river Apure and the Orinoco, on the West by Columbia, and by British Guyana and the Atlantic on the East. It has a population of about 87,000, and a coast line of more than 300 miles; the Delta of the Orinoco, which belongs to this State, has an area of 13,000 square miles, through which the river runs.

by 36 different channels. The whole area of the State is about 260,000 square miles.

Guyana is separated from the rest of the Republic by the great river Orinoco. The head waters of this river have never yet been reached, though several parties have attempted to get there. The vast forests and plains in which it rises are peopled by Indians, never yet subdued, and who will permit no white man or stranger to intrude on their territory. With the tribes occupying this part of the country, remains the secret of the Worari poison, with it they smear arrows as well as their other warlike implements, and a scratch means death without remedy. These tribes have a habit of serving a sort of notice on any traveller, trying to penetrate their country. If he retires on receipt of it, all is well, and he is not molested by them. If, after receiving it, he perseveres and tries to go forward, an implacable and unseen enemy dogs his every step, by day and by night he is attacked. From every tree, from every bush, a poisoned arrow flies, till at last worn out, and exhausted by this continual strife, he and his party fall a prey to their ferocious enemies.

During the latter part of our passage, that is from Barbadoes to Trinidad, we were accompanied by two French gentlemen who had been sent out by their Government to penetrate these wilds, and to collect plants, skins, and birds of rare or unknown kinds.

One of them had been already employed on a similar expedition, in which his leader was killed by the Indians,

and he had himself escaped by a miracle, with some half dozen poisoned arrows sticking in his clothes. The cause, as I understood, was some outrage, offered by the chief of the expedition to the Indians. One account was, that he tried to take one of their women ; another, that he had violated one of their graves, in an attempt to procure and carry away some skulls. Whichever is true, no doubt he paid the penalty with his life.

It is, I regret to say, a too frequent custom with all these explorers, of whatever nationality, to pay too little regard to the customs and feelings of the savages they come in contact with, and most of those who have perished in these undertakings, have fallen through an ostentatious and unnecessary disregard to the prejudices of the natives. Our French explorers were full of enthusiasm, they accompanied us up the Orinoco to Cindad Bolivar, where I saw them in full array. Helmets, puggarees, shirts, revolvers, bowie knives and all. They told me that they had hired a boat, were then occupied in putting stores on board, and would start up the river on the following Tuesday. Leaving Bolivar on the Monday, we said farewell, and often spoke of them during our journey to the mines, wondering where they were, and what probability there was of their return. However, when we returned to Cindad Bolivar, after a month's absence, the first persons we recognised, were our French friends still in war paint, still busy storing their boat, and still going to start on the following Tuesday. When we finally left Bolivar for England, we left them there, hopeful as ever, of an early start, but

as the river had begun to rise rapidly, rendering an upward journey by canoe, almost impossible for some months, it is very probable that they will be found at Bolivar for some time to come.

South of the river Meta, begins the woody region, which extends to the boundary of Brazil, and further, and is the Northern portion of that immense tract of forest land, which covers South America on both sides of the equator. This is the region, where the Peruvians, after their subjugation by Pizarro, are supposed to have penetrated into, after crossing the Amazon. Until the discovery and working of the gold mines, this part of Guyana was little known, and less liked. The forests are interspersed with grassy tracts of moderate extent, of which the surfaces are not flat, but rise and fall in undulating waves, rising sometimes to the dignity of hills. The vigorous growth of the trees, and their great variety, indicates an extraordinary fertility.

In the district of Upata, which forms part of this great belt, the fertility of the land is said to be inferior to no part of South America, while the climate is deliciously temperate, at a height of 1400 feet above the level of the sea. The traveller through this delightful region is perpetually meeting new beauties each time he passes through a belt of forest, where he is sheltered by overhanging trees, full of color, and regaled with a hundred various perfumes of flowers, he emerges on open tracts of moderate extent, not bare, but diversified by clumps of trees dotted about, while the rolling ground reminds him of the most beautiful parts of

English country scenery. Park, as it were, succeeds park, till he is at last fairly puzzled where to select to encamp, among so much contending and rival loveliness, and here, at a nominal rent, the cattle breeder may come and establish himself, with the certainty of realising 30 per cent. per annum on his outlay, and the possibility of very much more. Always on horseback, in a most lovely climate, and with pure air and clear blue skies, is it a wonder if I felt tempted to leave civilization, and remain in such a spot for ever.

All through this upland country emigrants would do well. The mistake of former Emigration Companies was the endeavour to locate Europeans on the lowlands and swamps of the Delta of the Orinoco, where the heat is intense, and the fevers and agues deadly to the white man, while inland, in the hill country of Guyana, if large estates are not to be acquired, the simplest labour, under a moderate climate, will give a man all and more than he requires, and render him very speedily independent. The land is there rich, abundant, and waiting only the arrival of industrious occupants. The roads throughout Guyana are in a very bad condition, owing to the sums levied for their repair, being remitted to Caracas, while nothing is done in the way of labour to repair them. They are traversed principally by donkies, mules, and heavy waggons drawn each by the ten or twelve oxen. The system adopted by the waggoners at present is, if the road appears unpassable at any point, to cut a new track round the bad part and take his own waggon through, but on no account to

put any work in which might assist the waggoner who follows, who in his turn has to get through as best he can. Every waggon carries an extra wheel, as it is calculated that at least one wheel will be utterly broken up during each journey ; the waggoner is able generally to do repairs, and frequently a waggon will arrive with all its remaining wheels bound up in splints, like a man with broken limbs ; often more than one wheel is quite destroyed, and then the waggon, and cattle, and goods, all remain by the road side, till the owner can bring up new wheels, sometimes from a distance of forty or fifty miles. Again, through the frequent occurrence of these bad places, the strain on the oxen is very great, and the loss is not less than 10 per cent. from accidents ; besides all this, the time occupied by these cuttings, and mendings, prolongs the journey, and the 200 miles is seldom got over in less than a month, under the most favourable circumstances, while in the rainy season, four months is no uncommon time to occupy with the journey.

The inconvenience of this through mode of transit has been so keenly felt that more than one company has been formed to construct a railway from the Orinoco to Guacipati, the capital of the province, and situated near the mines, to which almost all the traffic passes.

Engineers have reported on the absence of difficulties ; surveyors have been over the ground and made plans ; contractors have managed to smuggle in shiploads of stores of all sorts, free of duty, under the pretence, that they were required for the railway. Indeed, I believe, a whole shipload of dynamite was landed, under that



pretence, but not a yard of land has been levelled, not a pick, or a barrow, or a navvy has ever arrived ; neither a rail or sleeper has ever been seen, and the present company, a French one, which has at present the concession, and is reported to have raised £750,000 capital, is represented by a very gentlemanly Frenchman, who, with his servant and a double-barrelled gun, is staying at Las Tablas. I presume he is something like a man in possession, to prevent others from doing anything.

It is quite evident, however, to any one who has travelled through the country, that a railway would not for many years be a paying concern. The amount of traffic is too small, and the distances between the villages too great.

Now, if instead of spending a million of money in laying down a non-paying railway, a company was to undertake to keep the present road in order, and obtain a concession to place a certain number of tolls on it, the matter might be made a very profitable one.

There are few difficulties to contend with ; timber is plentiful all along the route, and with half a dozen of the gullies bridged by the tressel system, and a few of the bad spots levelled, waggons could pass in one half of the time at present occupied, and without damage by death to the oxen, or breakage to their carriages.

At present, it costs from threepence to sevenpence per pound for every atom sent up from the river to Guacipati ; with a good road, a saving of at least one half would be effected. Half a dozen gates or bars on the

road, at proper spots, would amply suffice to produce a sufficient sum to keep up the roads and yield a handsome dividend.

Along a good road, settlers would rapidly come, and traffic would naturally increase. At present it is all through traffic; there is little or none from one village to another; all is from the great stores at Bolivar, to their auxiliary stores at Upata, Guacipati and El Callao, and there is little or no return traffic, but with a settled and cultivated country, considerable quantities of produce could be sent back, thereby enabling carriers to secure a freight both ways.

No doubt, if the country ever becomes again populous, as formerly, a railway will supersede the road, but, as I before said, many years must elapse, before this can be made a paying concern.

At present, it is merely a vehicle for extracting money out of European pockets, to be squandered among promoters, surveyors, engineers, contractors, and above, and beyond all, among the members of a venal Government, willing to sell any concession, so long as they get a good pull out of the plunder. Let but Guyana shake herself free from the iron despotism, that now oppresses her, and trust to her own resources.

As an independent State, she has access to the sea by one of the finest waterways in the world, the river Orinoco.

Navigable almost the whole length of her frontier.

In the delta of that river, is the finest sugar, cotton and tobacco land in the world. Inland are savannahs that might swarm with cattle and horses. At the base of the hills, maize, corn, plantains, cacao, coffee, and fruits of all kinds are grown in profusion, while the hills produce the finest and hardest woods known, besides being full of minerals, and on her southern boundary, the river Essequibo affords her another water way to the ocean. The impenetrable forests of Brazil are behind her in case of need, and she has unusual facilities for trade with Europe, and the United States, either direct or through Trinidad and Demerara. Her population is relatively to the rest of Venezuela, a hardy and industrious one. Why then, should she submit to the gross injustice and oppression under which she now labours.

It has been the policy of the Government of Demerara always to discourage any mining enterprises, the owners of the sugar estates fearing, and with reason, that if once gold fever broke out, the exodus to the mining districts would greatly diminish the supply of labour at command and increase wages proportionately, which, at the present low price of sugar, means absolute ruin to them, and the discontinuance of the great sugar industry on which Demerara has hitherto chiefly depended.

Since the commencement of the present year, however, the tendency to explore for gold has been gradually gaining ground. Party after party has started for the Cuyuni and other spots, where indications of gold have been observed, and, latterly, overseers in several instances

have thrown up their situations and started for the gold districts, at the head of considerable bodies of prospectors; consequently Demerara is becoming alive to the fact that in her immediate neighbourhood, and in the direction of Guyana, lies a large tract of woodland, accessible in a great measure by water, with but few obstructions, and those easily overcome; that this territory abounds in indications of gold; that if these indications prove correct, a new industry will be created almost at her doors, and that, instead of sugar to Europe she will be called on to send supplies to an inland population, engaged in a more profitable occupation than cane cutting at a shilling a day.

The old Dutch navigators worked their way up the Essequibo and its tributaries to within 60 miles of the Caratal mining districts. There are three or four rapids to pass, but, with the present engineering knowledge, these would soon disappear, or become navigable, either by removal or by canal round them.

England's claim to the watershed of the Essequibo has never been abandoned, and I fancy the time is near at hand when more will be heard of this.

Nations now do not believe entirely in diplomatists who know nothing of geography. Men who occupy land which they believe belongs to their country, will be disposed to hold, and, if necessary, fight for it, and Governments, now, have to follow, rather than lead, the opinions of the people they govern.

The province of Guyana, which comprises one half

of Venezuela, and is itself larger than the whole of France, has a population of barely 50,000, and the greater part of these are either engaged in the mining district, or settled in the few towns widely apart, which are scattered about the country. Millions of acres of rich land in a fine upland, healthy situation, are absolutely without an inhabitant.

The authorities will tell you that they would gladly welcome emigrants. One, or even two millions of such might settle themselves and take what land they liked without interference, or any rent to pay. Soil good, climate healthy, perpetual summer, little labour required, and, like the patriarch, the emigrant could see his family grow up around him in peace and plenty. But no fortunes, no large crops to be shipped and great profits realised. I speak to those who, starving at home, desire to get a livelihood, and are willing to give up the excitements and pleasures of civilised home life for a contented and quiet existence under summer skies. Married men are at the bottom of most emigration schemes, and these seek rather, after interest for their outlay, in the shape of return from the regions they have populated, than the mere comfort and settlement of the emigrant. His health, and even life, are a secondary question to that of getting rich tracts of waste land, able to produce sugar, tobacco, cotton, corn, and other articles useful for home trade.

There may be fever and ague, but the land yields heavy crops, therefore people are urged to go there. Everyone hopes to escape the fever or ague, and to be

the one lucky enough to grow great crops and become rapidly rich and return home. That is the mischief—return home. The true emigrant should be at home where he settles : for the future, that alone should be his country.


How few, out of the thousands of emigrants, return home rich. How many are poor, disappointed, fever-stricken, and broken down ; among these, the real settler, the man who wants a home, a living only, has no place. Emigration schemes on a vast scale, both in Venezuela and elsewhere in South America, have again and again failed, and why ? The company, or originators, have selected the mouths or deltas of large rivers as settlements, from the richness of soil and proximity to the sea board. But these deltas, although rich beyond all other places, are also deadly beyond all other places. Raised to the rank of land from the vegetable deposit of ages, brought down by periodical floods, they are elevated but a few feet above the level of the river itself, and often, during the rainy season, reduced to a mere swamp. Covered with a thick growth of rank vegetation, constantly decaying and as constantly renewed, they form a true El Dorado to the one emigrant, whose iron constitution enables him to resist the deadly malaria, while they furnish only graves for the ninety-nine who succumb to those malign influences.

The delta of the Orinoco, was made the scene of one of these attempts, resulting in a disastrous failure. The place selected was utterly unfit for Europeans to exist in, still less to labour in, and the whole thing fell

through, after a great expenditure of life, time, and money, while, a hundred miles further up the river, lay, a fair open land, rising from the river side to the distant mountains, one thousand feet above, where the climate was fit, the land good, and the inhabitants scanty. But, the products required for the present, could not be grown here, or, if grown, could not be got down to the sea at a price to pay the speculator. So the emigrants died in the mud, and the uplands remain uncultivated.



## CHAPTER VII.

AVING completed all our business at Cindad Bolivar, we gladly bade adieu to that hot city, and embarked on our old boat, "the Bolivar," then about to make a return trip to Trinidad. Although we were only proceeding as far as Las Tablas, all the Custom House formalities had to be again gone through, and a permit obtained for us and our effects to be landed there. I shall have occasion hereafter, to describe more fully this part of the river, as I was compelled later on, to return to Cindad Bolivar in an open boat. Leaving Bolivar at 6 p.m., we reached Las Tablas about 1 o'clock in the morning.

The town of Las Tablas consists of an assemblage of mud huts, on the bank of the Orinoco, which, at this place, is very broad and very shallow. The ground slopes gradually from the street to the water, leaving a long reach of soft white sand, glistening in the fierce sunlight. The steamer, although built expressly to draw as little water as possible, cannot get near the shore, so we, and our belongings, are transferred into a flat-bottomed boat, and rowed a quarter of a mile, when we are landed on the beach aforesaid, to be immediately seized upon by another troop of soldiers and Custom House agents, and marched away to a mud hut, in front



of which, hangs the Venezuelan flag (in cotton stuff), guarded by a man and a Remington rifle. Here our baggage is impounded till the morning, as the Chief of the Customs is in bed, and is much too great a man to be disturbed, so we are allowed to pass out, and obtain shelter where we can. This, we at last do, in another mud-built and thatched shanty, bearing the pretentious sign of the English Hotel. Here, we obtain an empty room, and swinging our hammocks (which a polite Custom House officer had, after inspection and much negociation, allowed us to take with us), we tried to get whatever rest was possible, under a double infliction of sand-flies, and mosquitos. Anything to eat or drink, at that hour was out of the question.

At this hostelry, the only one the town of Las Tablas contains, we found the highest charges, the worst living, and the greatest dirt of all the high-priced, badly-conducted and dirty inns throughout the country. It belonged, of course, to a General, in this case a black one. After a sleepless night, we attended at the Custom House, where, on the arrival of the chief officer, who himself was very kind and polite, our luggage was examined, and we were permitted to remove it.

As Las Tablas bears a bad reputation, even in Venezuela, as a place where fever is always prevalent, and where a new arrival generally catches it before he has been there many days, we were very urgent in our desire to leave, but it was necessary to obtain mules for our journey. These had to be looked for and caught on the savannah, some twelve miles off, and the hotel people

assured us it was impossible to get away until the next day. However, by judicious bribery, and the influence of one or two of the storekeepers, to whom our agents at Cindad Bolivar had furnished us with letters of introduction, and perhaps better than these, because it was known that we were proceeding to the mines, and were sending up a large quantity of machinery through Las Tablas, which they were very anxious to secure the contract for, or for all these reasons combined, pressure was brought to bear on the mule owners, and by noon, some dozen animals were brought in for us to select from. A more wretched set I never saw. Sore-backed, and with wrung withers, they stood with drooping heads and starved bodies before us, but it was Hobson's choice, these or none. The owner spoke in high terms of their prowess and ability to do all we wanted, appealing to the crowd of loafers around, who joined in a chorus of praise. Mr. Matheson, one of the gentlemen to whom we had introductions, assured me that, however wretched looking the animals seemed, they were quite able to carry us, and that they were in the habit of doing the same journey with heavy loads once or twice every month, so with his assistance, we selected four of the most likely-looking, and hired them for the journey. We were lucky in meeting here with the peon, who comes every fortnight from Callao to Las Tablas with the mail bags, and was then about to return, as we were enabled to get him to go up with us, and to look after the animals, regulate the journeys, &c., &c. We found him a most pleasant and agreeable, as well as competent and active guide. Riding his own mule, we were not under the

necessity of providing an animal for him, and he proved of great assistance to us on our road. Having given the animals a good feed of corn, which they devoured as a luxury to which they had long been strangers, we proceeded to get what we could for ourselves. This was but meagre fare : very salt stock fish, cassava cakes, which, at first taste, seem to be a mixture of oatmeal and cotton wool, eggs, (mine was bad, and there were no more), and the usual coffee. The black waiter even seemed ashamed of the table, and deplored the absence of his master, who had gone to Trinidad to see his doctor. He was a General, as usual.

Rest there was none in this wretched place, hotter, if possible, than Cindad Bolivar, sand-flies in millions, and miasma in every puff of the hot, bad-smelling air, and yet Las Tablas has a very large carrying trade. All the goods, provisions, machinery, wine, spirits and supplies generally, for the entire mining territory, as well as for Guacipati, Upata, and other towns and villages through the greater part of Guyana, are, after passing through the Custom House at Cindad Bolivar, brought back by water to Las Tablas, and sent from thence by donkeys, mule carts and cattle waggons up into the interior. This is the place whence the railway, planned to go up to Guacipati, the capital, is to start from, when it is made. Yet nothing can be brought here direct. Bolivar is the port of entry, although a hundred miles higher up, and the short-sightedness of the Caracas Government, causes the price of every thing to be nearly doubled by these vexatious restric-

tions. Everything has to be landed, duties paid, re-shipped, re-landed, again inspected by Custom House agents, and certified as identical with the things already paid for at Bolivar, before a single article can be carried inland. This entails delays of from ten to thirty days, and frequently causes the price of the land transport to be doubled. Roads, excellent to-day, in a fortnight's time may be rendered impassable by the rains, and then, instead of twenty days occupied by the inland conveyance to Callao, it may take a couple of months, and sometimes more. All this could be avoided by making Las Tablas a port of entry for foreign vessels, but then this would injure the vested interests of Generals having concessions or property at Cindad Bolivar, and so the whole State of Guyana suffers.

On each side of the town of Las Tablas, along the river-side run lagoons and swamps, covered with mangroves, while inland, for six miles, runs a flat loose sandy plain.

Five miles further up another great stream adds its waters to the great river, and about nine miles from the junction, occur the famous falls of Coroni, which, in extent and beauty are only surpassed by Niagara. Here Raleigh landed and searched for gold. The noise of these falls is plainly heard at Las Tablas.

At 6 p.m., after again attempting to appease our hunger with the meagre fare provided, we made a start from Las Tablas, determined not to pass another night there. After half an hour's ride over the sands, the sky

suddenly became overcast, and we had our first baptism in Venezuela, being caught in a regular tropical storm.

The rain after an hour or more passed off, leaving us benighted, without a glimpse of moon or stars, while the lightning, with blinding flashes, still continued at intervals to light up for a moment every thing around, leaving us again in total darkness.

No wonder then, that at last in an open sandy plain, we managed to stray from a road, which, even in broad daylight, is traceable only by the marks of the waggon wheels. After wandering aimlessly about for a couple of hours we literally ran against an old hut, or shelter, consisting of poles stuck in the ground with a thatch of palm leaves, anything but impervious to the rain. Our guide, however, recognised it, and under his advice we swung our hammocks between the poles, unsaddled the mules and rested as best we could to await the break of day. No sooner had the first streak of light appeared on the horizon than we were on our feet ready to start, mules were loaded and saddled, hammocks packed and buckled on, and away we went. Everything seemed fresh and pleasant after the rain. Our guide informed us that we were at the edge of the forest, having traversed the sandy plain, and were six miles on our road. In half an hour we entered on the forest road. First came our baggage mule, loaded up with portmanteaus, bags, capateros, rifle, umbrellas, &c., &c., until the load seemed larger than the animal, and completely covered it, except head, tail, and four feet. Then followed our guide, riding a capital animal, with another

led mule, which was attached by its head-rope to the tail of the one he was riding. Then our party in single file; our engineer and superintendent, who had been many times in the country, and had frequently travelled this road; then the millwright, who also was well acquainted with the country; then your humble servant; and last, my sporting coadjutor.

All dressed nearly alike, trousers tucked into our boots, with huge spurs, flannel shirts, à la Garibaldi, with leather belts, in which were stuck revolver, bowie knife, and ammunition pouch, and, crowning all, great pith helmets, the best shelter from the scorching rays of the sun. In front of our Australian saddles were buckled our waterproof military coats, while behind was strapped a capatero (a coarse cotton bag like a pillow case, with strings to draw up at each end), holding a hammock and the usual necessities to change at each resting place. Our sportsman had, in addition, a pair of saddle bags, holding ammunition, filter, cosmetics and sundries, for his personal comfort. A queer-looking set we seemed, unwashed, with beards sprouting, splashed with last night's wet, hungry and unkempt, as we joked each other about our personal appearance. Soon, however, this ceased. Our thoughts were irresistibly drawn to the scene around us.

Here, at last we were in the primeval forest. As the dawn brightened, on all sides, rose the hum of insects, the cries of beasts, and monkeys; the parrots and macaws shrieked and chattered as they flew overhead, while the huge trees rising on each side towered aloft,

their bare trunks standing up like stone pillars for eighty or a hundred feet, and then covering over with their dense top foliage the entire road, affording a pleasant shelter to the traveller from the sun's rays. Huge bunches of orchids and parasites hung from, or twined on their branches, while many a liana or creeper twisted and turned around them. Many of these trees were quite bare, others covered with many colored blossom, while others again, were clothed in foliage, ranging from deepest green to bright yellow. Sometimes at little openings in the road would appear a perfect mass of bright crimson blooms, then another tree, covered with orange colored or mauve flowers, while clusters of stephanotis shed a perfume over the whole, that was almost overpowering. Little or no color was on the ground, or near it, all was above on the tops of these gigantic trees, not a bloom here and there, but entire trees, covering many yards of surface. Ferns, aloes, palms, &c. were conspicuous by their absence. The gigantic denizens of the primeval forest left neither space nor light for them to grow in. Here and there where some settler had formerly cleared away a patch which had been abandoned, we found them in profusion, but among the great trees, never. Round such clearings the creepers and parasites seem to have taken a stronger hold of the trees and coated them with whole sheets of green, hanging from their branches to the ground like a great pall, while a few straggling branches above seemed to struggle through them in vain endeavour to get, as it were, a breath of air.

Through this forest, ever the same yet ever new and changing, we rode on, silent and awed. The road (so called) was merely a wide track cut through it, the dead and rotten trees lying on each side, while their stumps stick up all over it, obliging the rider to pay some attention to his animal or risk an awkward fall. Now we would come on a wide and deep pool, round which it was necessary to creep cautiously, presently a fallen tree would obstruct the passage; this must either be gone round or cut through. Again, a mass of rocks would crop up requiring careful riding and sure-footed animals, or it would plunge suddenly down to where some black-looking stream ran sluggishly through the bottom and rise as abruptly on the other side. Here you must hold on by the mane, there by the tail, at another place lift your legs to the level of the saddle to avoid being wetted by the stream into which your mule would unhesitatingly jump. The best plan I found was to trust entirely to my animal; he knew the road, had been that way before, probably many times; I had not, so I trusted him, and my confidence did not prove misplaced.

After a pleasant ride through this scenery, of about four or five miles, we reached St. Jose, a collection of five or six small settlements, where we obtained some very good coffee, new milk and biscuits. Here our young sporting friend again gave vent to his enthusiasm expressing his disappointment at not having seen any large game, and hoping soon to meet tigers or bears, or other big animals. Being told that we might find



## VENEZUELA : ITS MINERAL WEALTH.

something further on, the rifle was looked up, loaded, and placed ready for action.

After a short stoppage at St. Juan, we pushed on again, passing by Corales, through the woods, for Paradero (sometimes called Paradiso). Before reaching this, we emerged from the woodland on to some savannah or open land, covered with fine grass, and with clumps of trees here and there, bearing a great resemblance to a gentleman's park. Scarcely had we left the wood, when we saw deer at no great distance, which, disturbed by us, at their feeding time, were running to shelter.

A little further on, our guide, who was in advance, threw up his hand and stopped. We all looked out, and there, sure enough, was a fine buck, at 130 or 140 yards distance, standing perfectly still under a tree. Our sportsman dismounted ; out came the rifle, and he slowly crept forward to get a good, steady shot, while we remained watching, and anticipating how pleasant an addition, venison steaks would be to the meagre breakfast we were accustomed to. At last, after careful adjustment and steady aim, "crack" went the rifle ; we raised our heads and looked ; so did the buck, who evidently not even alarmed, walked slowly three or four steps. Again rang out the shot. This time striking the ground some yards in front of him. His walk increased to a slow trot, giving opportunity for a third, and a fourth shot before he passed out of sight, into the woods. Our hopes of meat for breakfast were gone. An expression of melancholy and disgust pervaded the face of our guide, while the unlucky sportsman proceeded

to dilate upon the difficulty of making good shooting at uncertain and unknown distances ; that it was a new rifle, atmospheric influences, &c., &c.

It was gravely proposed by one of the hungry lookers on, that the peon should measure the distance to the next deer we met, and chalk a bull's eye on his side, when our friend would have a better chance. As for myself, I mentally registered a vow that if ever the meeting between the tiger and my sporting friend should occur within measurable distance of myself, I would, as the Yankees say, "make tracks."

Shortly afterwards, when passing through a belt of woodland, just before reaching Paradero, a large bird of the turkey species was seen sitting on the branch of a tree, some hundred yards in the bush. Our Mill Superintendent, who, I afterwards discovered, was really a very keen sportsman, and an excellent shot, quietly drew his revolver and fired. The bird dropped, but, owing to the dense nature of the underwood, could not be found.

We reached Paradero at eight o'clock in the morning, a distance from St. Juan of eighteen miles. This is another of the small village settlements met at intervals on the road. From the nature of the wood and bush round for miles, and the old and abandoned cultivated land this was probably one of the stations of the Capuchins, and a hundred years ago was thickly populated, and well cultivated ; to-day it is occupied by half-a-dozen Spanish and Indian, or half-bred, natives, who

grow only just sufficient for their own immediate wants, and levy a heavy toll on all travellers, in the shape of charges for what they supply.

We rested, during the heat of the day, at Paradero, when, thanks to our guide, who was well known, we procured an excellent breakfast. Here we tasted for the first time, a dish, peculiar to the country, called a sancocho, being a sort of soup or stew made from fowl, fish, and various kinds of native herbs and vegetables. We all pronounced it delicious, and ceased to regret the venison. After breakfast we slung our hammocks and rested till half-past three o'clock, when the mules, having been duly fed, and the bill paid, we started for Upata, a distance of twenty miles, passing through Altagracia, another small, straggling village or settlement. The distances from Las Tablas to Upata, with the different stopping places, are, from Las Tablas to Cherico, where we halted for the night, six miles, from Cherico to San Juan four miles, San Juan to Corales twelve miles, Corales to Paradero six miles, Paradero to Altagracia twelve miles, and Altagracia to Upata eight miles, making a total of forty-eight miles.

All the country through which we passed, with the exception of the first six miles to Corales, which is a sandy desert with only chapperal, a kind of scrubby tree with leaves like sand paper growing here and there on it, is very rich, and capable of growing cacao, coffee, vanilla, corn, sugar, and vegetables and fruits of all kinds in profusion. Traces everywhere abound of former extensive cultivation. Coffee and vanilla is frequently

seen growing wild. Most of the small villages we passed through were formerly missions or convents of the Capuchins or Jesuits, and were surrounded by a very large population of Indian cultivators, but now all is ruin, and the bush and forest are rapidly asserting their dominion. Upata is a considerable town standing in a plain surrounded by hills, and is 1,000 feet above the level of the sea.

Here the climate is delicious, the air pure and cool, and the temperature perfectly endurable to Europeans. It is looked upon as a sanatorium. Here people resort who suffer from the fever of the country, and cannot shake off its effects. In this beautiful climate they easily recover health and strength. There is a fine cathedral and a cemetery about half-a-mile distant. This is well-kept, and is filled with trees and flowers of all sorts.

Upata is a very old town, being mentioned by Raleigh in his history, as being visited by some of his men under Capt. Keymiss. It afterwards became a large mission or settlement of Capuchins, and had then a population of three or four thousand.

Upata, like all old Spanish towns, presents an appearance of cheerlessness and decay, very depressing to the visitor. The houses all present their blind side to the street, and the patio, or yard and garden, are enclosed in the rear. We spent Good Friday at Upata in an hotel of the usual kind, being provided with a room containing four rings for our hammocks, and a jug and basin ; but they gave us a very good breakfast, excellent

bread, very fine chocolate and coffee, and plenty of new milk, so that we were not by any means badly off. We were lucky also in procuring plenty of corn for our mules. Here our sporting friend finished up his first mule, the animal's back being so severely wrung that it was unable to proceed. The guide managed, after much running about, to procure him another, and his poor brute was left, to be taken, at the first convenient opportunity, to Las Tablas.

Leaving Upata, on Saturday at five a.m., we rode through a delicious country, always ascending, until we reached the highest point of the range, 1,400 feet above sea level. On crossing this, a magnificent view burst upon us. Away below, as far as the eye could reach, stretched vast undulating plains of waving grass, dotted at intervals with clumps of splendid trees. Some in bloom, others in leaf, and of every tint of flower or leaf, from deepest crimson to palest yellow. Occasionally a thin belt of forest marked the course of a stream, or a denser mass of trees shewed where lay a lagoon, while in the extreme distance, grey against the crimson dawn, rose the peaks of the distant mountains. This does not open by degrees, but, on turning a corner of the road, the whole panorama suddenly lies spread before you in all its impressive beauty. I can never forget it.

It is at this point that the watershed changes. On the Upata side, all the streams and rivers run to the north, and empty into the Orinoco; on the other side all the mountain streams run to the southward, emptying into the Yuruari, and eventually into the Essequibo.

I shall speak of this further on, when on the question of boundaries. Our first stoppage was at La Florida, a ranch or cattle estate, where we were very hospitably entertained. The house, of the usual description, almost unbearable, from its squalor and wretched appearance, to an Englishman, but considered by the inhabitants to be perfectly comfortable. The owners, I believe, are an old and wealthy family. Here again our friend took out his rifle, with a view to retrieving his reputation upon any alligators, snakes, or birds he could see in a lagoon near by. However, he returned without any results. We have now decided unanimously that we cannot trust to him for any additional supplies for our larder, and must procure and carry tinned meats in future.

After breakfast, and a good long rest, we left La Florida at 3.30 p.m., reaching a ranch called Candelaria at about 7, where we dined and stayed all night. Rose at 4 a.m., and after a slight breakfast of milk, coffee and biscuits, started on our journey. The country still retains its character of park-like beauty. As we proceed, the wood clumps increase in size and number, and the soil is evidently very fertile, but there are no inhabitants. We passed many very beautiful situations for farms. A little further on, when passing through a belt of wood, we were shown the place where the ambush was laid for the capture of the gold coming from the mines, and just by, the spot, marked with a cross, where Mr. Bush, who was in charge of it, was speared and killed. This occurred in 1878, and was the first and only time that any such attempt was ever made.

Upon the news reaching the mines, the population turned out *en masse*, and parties scoured the country in every direction. The perpetrators, six in number, were very soon captured, and taken to Guacipati, where they were lodged in jail, from here they were sent to Ciudad Bolivar with an escort of soldiers, but they were all shot by the escort long before they reached that place. The officer in command, on his return to Guacipati, reported that they had tried to escape, and not having sufficient men to prevent it, he shot them all. Their bodies were identified, and they were buried where they fell, at a spot not far from Florida. The officer was publicly censured, but was afterwards promoted, and I heard that he received some 1,000 dollars from the mines for promptly carrying out the law. It was felt at the mines indeed, that should any of these men escape through family influence or bribery, as was only too probable, if they were once out of the neighbourhood, there would be no safety in future for the gold going from the mining district to Bolivar, and as this is from 20 to 30,000 ounces of gold per month, representing about £100,000 sterling, it was absolutely necessary that an example should be made, and by their summary punishment, others effectually deterred from like attempts. It was often stated, however, before me, that the originator of the robbery was a man of high position at Caracas, and that, not being present at the actual attempt, he had escaped punishment, but was eventually shot by some unknown hand in Caracas. Passing this memorable spot, we reached Platinal at 10 a.m. Our friend had another shot this morning at an eagle, or very large

falcon, sitting on a dead tree, who flew away apparently none the worse. At 9.30, before reaching Platinal, we obtained the first view of the land where lie the gold mines to which we are bound. Platinal is a very large low house, thatched as usual with palm, with corral and garden attached, and belongs to an old Spanish family, holders of a great deal of land in the neighbourhood. Here, after a glass of milk, we rested till 2 p.m., when we started for Guacipati, which we reached at 7 p.m. Guacipati is not so large or populous as Upata, but it is the Capital and centre of Government of the State of Guyana. Here lives the Governor, and all Government officials.

During our ride on Good Friday, at every ranch or dwelling we passed, all the inhabitants, young and old, male and female, were in gala dress, and occupied in playing peg-top. They spun and pegged away in the gravest manner. It was evidently a national pastime, and was highly thought of, as a sort of ceremony especial to Good Fridays and Saint Days, rivalled only by the national sport of cock-fighting, which is carried on in every town. The cocks are fought in their natural spurs, reduced by scraping to the sharpness of needle points. Large sums are constantly won and lost at these contests.

The gaol, the barracks, the courts of justice, both civil and criminal, and all the various offices for registration of deeds, or titles, or powers, or agreements (for everything has to be registered in Venezuela, and must be on stamped paper) for receipt of taxes, dues, fines,



or other payments, and generally for the conducting of the Government. Here also is a Cathedral, made out of part of an old convent. Guacipati, like all other towns on the road, is mainly dependant on the mining district for support, and when the mines close, or are not doing much, trade at Guacipati and elsewhere languishes. At the time of our arrival everything was very dull, and our enterprise was looked upon with great favor, as likely to give an impetus to business generally. There are several very good and large stores in Guacipati, either branches of, or in connexion with the great wholesale stores at Cindad Bolivar, whence they draw all their supplies. During our journey to Guacipati another disaster overtook our sportsman. We were caught in a heavy shower, and were obliged to don our mackintoshes. Mine was simply one of the military cloaks as worn by the cavalry, and answered its purpose very well, but our friend, disdaining such a common article, had ordered one to be specially prepared for him (all his things were special), with the addition of a large hood to cover his hat. He had donned for his entry into Guacipati, a very nice Tussore silk coat (light yellow), over his shirt, and looked very nice in it. When I saw the rich blue black cape unfolded, and put on, with its hood, amply protecting hat and head, I felt quite mean, and loathed my own rusty looking garment with no head protector, but when, after the rain was over, and we uncloaked, I saw the results, I became quite reconciled. Whether the eminent firm who had made the garment my friend wore, had been hurried in their preparation, or whether they had thought it was

not likely to come back from South America, and so did not mind, they certainly had not taken care in dyeing it. When he emerged from its ample folds, at first I was doubtful whether or no the interview between the tiger and him had taken place, and the beast was there in his stead, he was so colored ; long stripes and blotches of black streaked his hat and face, while the coat had become like Joseph's, a coat of many colors. I fancy, from the expression of his face, that the eminent firm are likely to hear more of the matter.

We remained at Guacipati three days to settle our business there, and everywhere met with great kindness and hospitality.

On Easter Monday there was a great celebration of some victory won by some one during some revolution, but whether it was Bolivar or Blanco, or Crespo, or any one else, I was quite unable to learn. However, dynamite cartridges were let off every five minutes in the Plaza, or square, then a man blew a bugle, then another beat a drum, thirty men with muskets appear in front of barracks, form in line, officer heads them, and they march some thirty yards to the end of the Plaza, and back again. Same repeated every two hours. Every house has a flag displayed, some Venezuelan, some German, some French, and some nondescript, while three door bells, supposed to belong to the Cathedral, rang at intervals during the day.

In the evening the inhabitants walk on the Plaza, amid crackers, drums, trumpets and musketry, until midnight, and then the celebration is over, and one can sleep.

## CHAPTER VIII.



WE left Guacipati on Thursday, April 29th, at 2 p.m., and now considered ourselves as fairly entered on the mining district of Guyana. The country after leaving Guacipati maintains its savannah-like character interspersed with thin belts of forest, generally marking water courses; but the soil becomes more barren, the grass is coarser, the patches of bare red earth and out-cropping rock more frequent, while the land is either sandy or gravelly. This appearance of sterility is increased by the habit of burning the grass just before the rainy season every year. After a pleasant ride of three hours we reached the belt of woodland through which the famed mines and town of El Callao are approached.

Passing through this and crossing the river Yuruari, we reached El Callao about 5.30 p.m., entering through the "Gate of Hell," and on our departure we had to pass out through "Purgatory," two streets so named at each end of the Town. El Callao is a veritable miners' town, built without plan, and with materials of the oddest description; while, as it is impossible, on account of earthquakes, to carry the houses higher than one story, and space is very limited, they are all huddled up together. They are all built either with

wood or mud walls, and roofed with galvanized iron ; or in some cases with empty provision tins, cut and flattened out.

The streets are laid (not paved) with huge stones, open gutters running down the centre, through which runs the sewage. There are no sanitary arrangements whatever, and after seeing the dirt, squalor, and close packing of the inhabitants, the comparative healthiness of the place is surprising. It consists commercially of about 20 stores, connected with the wholesale houses of Cindad Bolivar, about 100 drinking shops, and 30 or 40 cafes, billiard saloons and gambling dens, all of the most miserable looking sort ; but I was told that any one who had influence enough to get a permit to sell liquor, and money enough to rent a single room to sell it in, might, with no other stock than a deal board for counter, and two or three empty flour barrels for seats, two or three dozen bottles or jars of common country spirit, and half-a-dozen glasses, make a net profit of from £2,000 to £3,000 per annum. The rent of a room of this sort, in a good position, would be £400 per annum. Parafine or petroleum is the only illuminant used. The stores supply everything, and goods costing one pound in England or North America fetch here £10 or £20, according to the quantity in stock. We were received with great kindness, and most liberally entertained by Mr. Perkins, the superintendent of El Callao mine, who showed us over every part of this vast establishment.

Mr. Perkins, who is an American of considerable

experience, has effected great reforms and saving, with much increased efficiency in this mine. He has introduced and perfected here the use of Pneumatic Drills, which had proved a failure in every other mine in Venezuela which had tried them. The secret of his success was the importation from California of experts accustomed to their use, and in the case of a strike of miners which recently occurred, he was enabled by them alone to keep the mills running until the men gave in to his terms. One of these drills properly handled will do the work of 10 miners working by hand.

*El Callao Mine.* The richest in South America, was originally a spot where miners, in consequence of proximity to the river, used to dig the surface soil and wash the earth, finding nuggets and gold dust in very considerable quantities. The ground throughout the neighbourhood is honeycombed with these pits, from six to twenty feet deep, and this industry is occasionally carried on at the side of the river, when it is very low. In 1870 a small company was formed to dig down to the bed rock and try for a lode, and the original capital consisted of 12 shares, of 500 dollars each. In April, 1873, there were 39 shareholders, and by the end of that year 106. At present there are 600. The original capital was raised in the country, and they set to work with varying success. Original shares now worth between £60,000 and £70,000 each, were offered in Trinidad for £200. At last, after proof that the lode was undoubtedly very rich, more capital was brought

in, better machinery employed, and the mine progressed until it now produces the enormous quantity of 19,000 ounces of gold per month. The share Capital of £13,524 was subsequently raised, by subdivision, into 32,000 shares, of £40 each nominal, the market price of each share being now about £80, and the dividend in August, 1886, was at the rate of 24 per cent. on that amount. The nominal capital at present price of £80 per share is £2,576,000, and there is a rumour of a proposed subdivision again into £10 shares. At present the produce is about  $2\frac{3}{4}$  ounces to the ton, but there have been spots from which six and even seven ounces have been obtained for considerable periods.

El Callao, however, has, like other mines, had its periods of depression. Extravagant outlays, superintendents addicted to profuse expenditure, some in machinery, others in building, have more than once reduced it to a low ebb, but a discovery in time of a richer vein of paying stuff has always turned up to assist it. The management in times past was princely. Samples containing large quantities of ore were freely given away; instances are known of as much as 10 ozs. of gold in a single sample, and £50,000 per annum is a moderate estimate of the loss to the mine through such outgoings. Now all this is stopped, samples must be paid for, even by the superintendent himself. I fancy, however, the management is not quite so careful. It is a mistake to have the board in Venezuela alone. The interests of European shareholders are very large, and they should have a greater voice on the board which at

present consists of four gentlemen (Corsicans), all at Cindad Bolivar.

The gold in this mine is found in a fine white quartz, is free gold and plainly visible, indeed I have seen a sack full of samples in the office which, if assayed, would yield hundreds of ounces per ton, but these are of course picked specimens. In company with the superintendent I descended No. 6 shaft to the workings 780 feet deep. Mr. Perkins afforded me every opportunity and assistance for investigation, Callao is undoubtedly a magnificent mine, and had the lode continued to maintain its course with regularity would be the best in the world, but of late there has been a bend in the lode and a tendency to turn upwards again. This may cease and the lode again descend; if it does not, then Callao's prosperity will quickly terminate. There will be a vast increase in the produce for a short time when at the bottom of the pocket, and then it will die away to nothing. Up to the present time, although earnestly sought after, no fresh descent of the lode has been discovered. In Mr. Perkins, the superintendent, the directors have undoubtedly got the right man in the right place. The lode in this mine runs N. and S., in most others the lodes run E. and W. The vast engineers' and carpenters' shops attached to the works are all fitted with the best and newest appliances and machinery, while at the mine itself everything is studied for the comfort of the miner, and wherever possible, labour is economised by the use of machinery, and the huge storehouses are packed full of

every article that can by any possibility be required. Their newest mill lately erected is capable of crushing twice as much ore as the old one, with a staff of one half the number of men and with the same steam power, the weight of the stamps being greatly increased.

The residence of the superintendent and staff is the finest building in the district, and the display of the various woods of the country employed in panelling the office, and beautifully polished, is unique.

Notwithstanding all this, I would sooner sell any Callao shares I held, at their present price, than buy more. For market purposes they may be forced higher, but in my opinion they are now fetching their full value, and, if they fall, the fall will be great. Callao is at present running 120 stamps, and the produce for August last was, according to their returns, 19,000 oz., or nearly £75,000 sterling.

During a recent strike of the miners, owing to a dispute as to the number of inches to be drilled in the rock to constitute a day's work, the men wanting 32 inches and the superintendent insisting on 40 inches as the proper quantity, Mr. Perkins set to work eight automatic drills, with which he succeeded in keeping up a supply of quartz for the mills until the men gave way. These automatic drills had before been tried in other mines, but had invariably failed, owing to the employment of average miners to work them. Mr. Perkins brought over men from California specially skilled in working these drills, and the result was a



great success, each drill doing in two hours the day's work of a miner. The only drawback to the use of these drills is the initial expense which is very heavy, and the necessity of employing none but specially trained men who are difficult to obtain.

At present El Callao is paying £30,000 per annum for fuel, having cut down all the timber near the mine, so that it has to be drawn in by waggons from a very considerable distance.

*Callao Bis.* We visited Callao Bis during our stay at Callao. It lies at the top of the Town of El Callao, and, like El Callao, is bare of timber, and will have to buy in all its fuel, when required. This mine was originally opened with the hope of coming up on the same rich lode as El Callao, which, according to calculation, at the incline the lode lay, would somewhere or other pass through it. There have been three separate shafts sunk by different managers for this purpose, but none of them have yet struck the lode. The last of them, sunk by General Volveider while in charge, is the deepest, and would undoubtedly have struck the Callao lode but for the unexpected divergence from its former dip. Assuming which at best, is doubtful, that it again resumes its former dip it will pass through one corner of the Callao Bis property at a depth between 300 and 600 yards. To cut this, if possible, Captain Richards, the present superintendent, has commenced sinking a new shaft at the edge of the property, which is now down some 100 feet, and may, in the course of another

year, reach the lode, if the lode should run there. Capt. Richards, undoubtedly, is conducting the work as economically as possible, and it would be difficult to find a better man.

There is another spot called the Azulas, which are old Spanish works long since abandoned, on which the Callao Bis Company are working, but no ore has been got from them ; nor do I think they will ever yield a paying quantity. Callao Bis has also a 20 stamp mill erected, in such a position that as soon as it commences quartz crushing, all the tailings will block up the main street of Callao, so that, even if the lode is cut, it will cost £5,000 to remove the mill to a new site near the river, if the Company can get one. I estimate that, under the most favourable circumstances, it will cost at least £30,000, before a ton of ore can be crushed by the Callao Bis Company, and further, I do not think it likely they will cut El Callao lode at all. An arrangement was made with El Callao to work the shaft nearest to Callao Bis, on joint account as to expenditure, with a view of ascertaining whether the lode continued to run to Callao Bis, but for some time past work has been discontinued there, and I do not think Mr. Perkins the man to abandon a paying lode, while half the expenses were guaranteed to him, and he took all the produce. The closing of Callao works at this point does not augur well for the future of Callao Bis.

No. 3 shaft on Callao Bis, now abandoned, is 200 feet

deep, and is half full of water. All the shafts are in a line bearing west.

The new shaft No. 4 is calculated to cost £20 per foot. It may therefore be looked upon as a mine now about to be opened.

If the El Callao lode should be cut, I estimate that it will run about 200 yards through Callao Bis, dipping to 1,500 feet, and will then pass out of it into El Callao again. The flat, or shift which occurred some time ago, and which (if it ends by going down), may at any time occur again, carries the lode further and further away from Callao Bis. If it turns upwards and does not descend, there is an end to Callao Bis altogether. It may therefore be taken for granted that the property of Callao Bis is entirely dependent on the course of the El Callao Lode. If it runs as hoped, it will take at least a year to reach it. Then a mill must be put up in a different place before the ore can be crushed, so that under no circumstances can any dividend be expected from this mine for at least two years to come, and £30,000 must be expended in addition to what has been spent already. It is for investors to calculate for themselves what dividend they should ultimately get to recoup this outlay.

*Caratal* is the name of the district where gold was first found by the explorers, and where quantities of surface soil are still washed for gold, which is found in nuggets. The Town is called Neuva Providencia, and

## 114 VENEZUELA : ITS MINERAL WEALTH.

is a 20 minutes' ride from Callao. There is also a mine of the same name.

Taking Caratal as a centre, the nearest group of mines consist of El Callao with 120 stamps, Callao Bis with 20 stamps, both already disposed of. Then come Cartago or Tigre, Nueva Providencia, Union with 20 stamps, Hansa also with 20, St. Louis, Panama with 60 stamps, Nagapai with 50, Santa Rosa 30, Potosi or Peru 40, Chili with 60, and El Choco, about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  hours ride from Chili. Of all these mines Callao, Union, Panama, Chili and Peru are either at work, or could start at a days' notice.

*The Cicapra* is a rich deposit of what is known as placer gold; the mine itself is difficult to work on account of its sulphurets. It has a 20 stamp mill, but it would take some time to renew foundations, etc., and get it ready for work; and I believe it is in contemplation to work this mine in conjunction with the Union. The one having machinery fit to go and the other an undoubted Lode; and I am informed that some parties from Venezuela are now in Europe trying to form a company to carry on the works.

*Eureka* mine has a mill but no quartz, and is shut down, but may some day be started again under a new name; and it is very necessary for intending investors in foreign mines to be specially careful in their enquiries as to the antecedents of the property, otherwise they are likely to be saddled with a worked out mine, with delapidated machinery, just started to run, in order that

it may be described as a mine in full equipment and going order.

*Santa Rosa* has an excellent 30 stamp mill in good working order and fit to start at a week's notice, but from all I could learn I fear the Lode is very poor and will not pay for working, nor do I think there is any capital left to carry on with.

*Chili, Panama, and Nagapai* are so intimately connected together through Austin's concessions, that I will leave them until I give the history of the concession.

*Union* mine is now being run by the El Callao Company. A new 20 stamp mill has been put up, but there is little if any Lode on the property, and it would never pay by itself; it has of late been crushing Santa Rosa quartz, but the yield has not been more than half an ounce to the ton, and this will barely pay expenses when fuel has to be brought so far. It is thought by some that the chairman of El Callao contemplates selling this and Cartago, under a new name, to some European company.

*Hansa.* This mine was at one time worked by Americans or Germans, with a small capital, and with undoubted success, but it afterwards was the victim of extravagant management and so failed, as all the capital was exhausted and no more was to be got from the shareholders.

It has a twenty stamp mill, but constructed in such a stupid manner that there is no place for the tailings or

refuse to pass away, and the foundations are now quite rotten, so that in any case the mill would have to be rebuilt. The shaft is 150 feet deep and is now full of water, which must be pumped out, and water in the mine, in great quantities, will always be one of the chief difficulties to contend with in working this mine, if it is ever started again under a new name. There is an undoubted Lode and gold in it. How it can be made a paying concern to shareholders is a different question.

*Bolivar Hill.* This mine is in this district. It belongs to a French company, is now closed down and not likely to start again, as the machinery has been offered for sale in parcels.

I may here remark that two mines which have been introduced to the English investors, under the alluring names of New Callao and West Callao are not in the district at all, nor within 200 miles of the El Callao mine, with which they have nothing in common except the name; they are situated on the other side of Bolivar. No gold has ever been produced there, and most people in the mining districts deny that they exist at all as mines.

*Milord* is the name of another mine in this district, but it has no works, nor could I learn that it was ever a paying concern.

*Cartago, or Tigre,* Mill and works are all in bad repair and obsolete, but a lode has been proved to exist.

*Neva Providencia* has no works at all now, those that were there have been sold.

At *El Choco, or La Concordia*, the works are old and worthless, and many of them sold and removed. I heard while in the country that some attempt was being made from Trinidad to open up El Choco, and bring it out as a new company, but the information was very vague and may have referred to some other place of the same name, as I could not get any one to tell me exactly where the mine was situated, from which they were expecting great things; some called it New Choco. In the neighbourhood of the mining district nothing was known about it.

Of all these so called mines, El Callao, Nagapai, Cartago, Chili, Panama, Potosi and Hansa have been proved to possess lodes yielding gold in paying quantities, the others are in my opinion worthless, except to people on the spot.

*Nagapai.* This mine borders on part of El Callao, and at one time was a really productive and paying property.

It is necessary here to give a short sketch of the property known as Austin's concessions, which have been the cause of so much litigation and ultimate loss to Nagapai, Chili, Panama, Potosi, &c.

Mr. J. B. Austin obtained from the then Government of Venezuela a concession of a number of minas, or hectares of land for mining. One of the conditions of

the concession being that works should be erected, and mining work begun on it, within a given time. In the concession no plan or place was given, and J. B. Austin, who seems to have been a very cunning person, proceeded to mark out his concession; but instead of taking one piece of land, as was evidently the intention of the grant, he split it up into ten separate small pieces, numbered 1 to 10, and took one of these on the course of every lode that was discovered, thus: there is Nagapai, with concessions 2, 3 and 10 surrounding it; Tigre, with No. 4, 5 and 6 near it; New Hansa, adjoining No. 10; Santa Rosa, beyond Tigre, with Nos. 3 and 4; Panama, surrounded with Nos. 7 and 8; and Chili, which is next, joins Austin No. 9. The only works erected, were at Nagapai, and eventually the Government interfered and claimed the forfeiture of all the pieces on which no machinery had been placed, alleging, that the intention of the grant was, that works should be erected on each separate piece which, in fact, constituted a separate concession.

Previous to this, however, Mr. Nicholson, while manager at Chili, had purchased the concession Austin No. 9, and proceeded to work it, and from this, Chili mine has undoubtedly drawn a large quantity of gold. Mr. Nicholson, some two years ago, was obliged to leave the country owing to some difference with the Government. It is believed that he headed some rising of the miners, and at the last moment, when in face of the soldiery, he hauled down the English flag, which he had hoisted at Chili, and surrendered. Most



of the revolted miners suffered imprisonment, but he escaped to Trinidad.

Consul Reddan, who was sent to the spot by the English Government to enquire into the matter, made a return on the subject. Mr. Nicholson now claims from the Chili company the value of all the gold they had extracted from it, alleging that he had purchased Austin No. 9 for himself. This the company denied, saying that he bought it while in the employ of Chili, as the manager of Chili, and with money, &c., belonging to the Chili company ; then Nagapai interferes, alleging that no sale was made at all, and that it belongs to Nagapai ; and so legal proceedings go on, ruinous to all parties. One of the disputants (who it was is doubtful), called the attention of the Government to these endless quarrels, and at last the Governor seized all the Austin concessions on which no buildings were put, and declared them forfeited. This had the immediate effect of shutting off Chili from its richest source of supply, and causing Nagapai to close entirely ; because in the latter case all the works were on Nagapai, and all the lodes on Austin, Nos. 10, 3 and 2, which they were prohibited from working.

Nagapai was therefore closed in consequence of these disputes ; and now the mine, at one time thought likely to rival Callao, is full of water and, of course, after two years' stoppage, will require a very large outlay to put matters straight, the machinery in working order, and get and keep the mine dry and fit to work ; £100,000

must be expended, and that very carefully and judiciously on it, to effect this.

Mr. Nass is at present in charge of the property, but there were reports that a new Company were in negociation for it. This Company, now called the Venezuelan Austin Gold Mining Company, Limited, have, according to the telegrams received from Mr. Charles Oxland, who, I understand, represents them in Venezuela, received information that the Company are now in complete legal possession of all the ten Austin concessions, including the famous Austin No. 9, situated close to the Chili mine. I wish them every success in their undertaking, but a very large outlay is imperative to set Nagapai at work again, and I cannot understand what use Austin No. 9 can be to them, or any one else, except Chili, that is, if it is not worked out. Chili no doubt has had large quantities of ore from it, but they believed, when I was in the country, that it was worked out, and while at Chili I had an opportunity of thoroughly inspecting it, having gone through all the workings in company with the Governor of the Province and the Inspector of Mines, who were visiting it to ascertain whether it was still being worked by Chili, and they expressed themselves as perfectly satisfied that all workings in that direction had long been abandoned, and allowed to fall in. By what means any other Company are going to raise quartz there and take it away (if there is any), without infringing on the Chili property, is a mystery to me.

I fear the attempt will only lead to more litigation. The true course is to come to some arrangement with the Chili Company, and hand it over to them. The Austin Company will still have their hands more than full.

*Chili.* This mine has produced considerable quantities of gold, the richest lode being Austin No. 9. It has a paid-up capital of about half-a-million, which is all spent, and when I was in Venezuela there were debts and liabilities amounting to £30,000, owing to workmen and merchants, consequently the mills and works were closed. The superintendent, Mr. Rochford, a man of great ability and judgment, had by singular tact and management, prevented threatened foreclosures, thus enabling the Company to send out some money to go on with, and I understand that the mills have again started and remitted 1,300 ounces of gold within the month, but even this amount, if continuous, would not suffice to pay dividends on the enormous capital. The works are very large, and in good order, but the frequent changes of management have been disastrous. There is undoubtedly a good lode, and Chili has sent home more than 2,000 ounces of gold per month, but even that is not enough to make it a paying concern to the shareholders. It is about four miles from El Callao, and is completely equipped with a 60-stamp mill, on solid stone foundations.

Shaft No. 4 is 900 feet deep, and shaft No. 1, or water-shaft, 200 feet deep ; both have complete lifting, pump-

ing, and other machinery, either working or ready to erect.

M. Rochfort, who has now been twice in command, was formerly commandant of the police in one of the Indian districts, and is unequalled in the management of the somewhat turbulent and restless natures he has to deal with. He has kept this concern going through some very troublous times. Chili has, as I have already stated, the additional misfortune to be at loggerheads with Mr. Nicholson, a former superintendent, relative to the title and workings of Austin No. 9. Freed from debt and law, and with a capital of £150,000 at most, it would be a paying concern and very valuable property.

*Potosi or Peru* is close to Chili. It has very extensive works and machinery, and a capital of about £700,000. Like its neighbours, it has been to law, with no good results, and was closed during the time I was in the country. There is an undoubted lode, but it gets lost at times, and has to be looked for; a very expensive process. There is a very large and expensive staff on this mine.

*Panama.*—This mine is well stocked with machinery, having sixty stamps in working order, under the superintendence of Mr. Simmons; it certainly has produced gold in very considerable quantities, but it is loaded with a very heavy paid up and expended capital. Latterly the lode has proved very capricious, becoming poorer and poorer, and occasionally stopped by what is technically called a horse, that is, a different sort of

rock intersecting or crossing the lode, which must be worked through or round to find the lode again. Sometimes these horses are so big that they cannot be got through, and the lode is lost. At present there is a diminution in the quantity of ore raised, and the lode is not as rich as formerly. This mine also has a quantity of sulphurets, which hitherto have baffled all endeavours to get the gold from them, but at the time of my visit Messrs. Fraser and Chalmers, of Chicago, had sent out a Mr. Hill to try a new method, and this gentleman expressed himself as confident of success. If so, it will make a considerable difference in the quantity of gold obtainable, but what dividend the mine will pay on its large capital is a question for its shareholders. I am not one. Since writing the above I learn that Panama has shut down, on account of another horse, or cross rock, intercepting the lode, but that Mr. Hill's method of treating the refuse sulphurets has proved very successful.

*La Victoria or Victory* is about ten miles direct from El Callao, but twenty-five according to the track, or road for waggons, &c., across the savannahs. This property consists of two separate grants, or concessions, called *La Victoria* and *Altamira*, overlapping each other, and the Company, to prevent future litigation and dispute, wisely bought both, and incorporated them under the title "*Victory*." The property is situated on one of the spurs of the mountains, about 200 feet above the level of the savannah. The situation is very healthy, and the climate cool.

The entire property is covered with virgin forest, affording facilities for working enjoyed by no other Company in Venezuela. A good deal of money was squandered by the superintendent of a former Company, but since the present Company has purchased the property, it appears to be getting into a sound state.

The capital is £175,000, of which only £140,000 has been called up. There are two distinct lodes on this property running entirely through both concessions, and crossing or intersecting each other about the middle.

There is no question as to the existence of plenty of gold bearing quartz, which can be seen cropping-out on the surface of the hills, while on the banks of the two quebradas or streams which run through the property, large lodes, one of 6ft. and the other 15ft., are clearly defined and visible ; there is no doubt of their richness, for the specks or points of gold can be seen by the naked eye. On this property a twenty-stamp mill is in course of erection, five stamps being already up, and the remainder ready, and works of all descriptions, such as tramways, saw mills, pumps, piping, dams, and tanks for water, are being rapidly pushed forward.

The first five stamps started running in July, and at the first day's trial, crushed seven-and-a-half tons of quartz, yielding over an ounce of gold to the ton. The cost of working the mills, owing to certain favorable circumstances of wood, water, &c., comes under half an ounce per ton of quartz crushed, including all expenses,

up to the delivery of the gold bars to the escort at Callao, so that, with a paid-up capital of £135,000 only, I think that, with careful management, it bids fair to be a great success. It has in its favour a plentiful supply of wood and water close at hand, and an unlimited quantity of quartz in sight, without having to sink deep shafts.

In Venezuela, it was considered to rank next to Callao, and many experts say that it will, in time, equal that famous mine in the quantity of gold produced.

It has one great advantage over the majority of Venezuelan mines, that is, everything is paid for, it has no debts, it has capital in hand, and the subscribed capital of the Company, £135,000, is smaller than any other there; requiring only a moderate production to pay good dividends. Let us hope that it will not, like many other mines, be made a medium for Stock Exchange speculations, which always prove so disastrous to shareholders.

Before quitting this part of my subject, I would observe that very incorrect notions of these gold-mining operations exist in Europe. The woody district of Guyana, extending down to the Essequibo and back into Brazil and the banks of the Amazon, is undoubtedly one of the richest gold-holding countries in the world, and was rightly looked upon by the adventurers of old as containing the far-famed El Dorado, but although gold certainly exists in very large quantities, the recovering it in paying quantities is another matter. Indians and poor natives are constantly seeking and finding gold

by surfacially digging and washing the earth, wherever they can find water near enough for their purpose. Nuggets of considerable value are constantly found. Caratal district is especially famous for this sort of mining; rich pieces of quartz are often picked up, which, on being crushed by a hammer, will repay the individual for the labour expended. But gold quartz mining is quite another matter. A large outlay must be made to erect valuable works and machinery, fuel for the engines must be at hand, and water all the year round without fail—given all these things, comes the last, the most important, though least understood here, the gold-bearing quartz lode. We are told of rich lodes, and samples are produced, shewing plenty of gold. Assayers proclaim a yield of fabulous quantities of gold to the ton, and then come the calculations, shewing in the most irrefutable manner, that although the samples show such immense quantities, yet that one ounce only to the ton is sufficient to pay handsome dividends, then sums such as:—If one stamp can crush two tons in one day, yielding two ounces, how many ounces will one hundred stamps produce in a year. All this, although perfectly true, and perhaps issued in good faith, is a delusion; it is not from such rich lodes, or magnificent specimens that great dividends are made—it is from thick, solid masses of quartz with gold all through them, not with a rich, thin streak in the middle. A very rich lode may be a streak of gold (truly very rich), but only half an inch wide, running through the lode. But to obtain this it is necessary to get out and crush the surrounding rock to enable the miners to work.



The galleries must be a certain height and width, and all the stone got out, must be lifted and taken away out of the mine, or it would be blocked up, and it must be put through the mill and crushed, for when once blasted no one could pick out all the rich pieces. So that the enquiry of the investor should be, not how rich is the lode, or what do the samples assay, but what is the size of the lode,—does it yield gold all through, if not, how does the gold lie in it, and is it free gold or sulphurets. The other enquiries, as to capital, title, liabilities, debts, &c., at home and abroad, most commercial men can very well deal with.

Above all things, in entering into new undertakings, no Company should make long appointments or engagements with its managing staff. It is too often the fashion for sellers of such properties, to get themselves or a friend appointed to situations of trust, and emolument, for considerable periods, generally two or three years. If success is ever to be hoped for, this should be prohibited and indeed no engagement should be for more than one year certain, with a fair notice on either side at the end of that time. I could name more than one mine whose prospects have been entirely wrecked and whose shareholders never had nor are ever likely to have any dividend through the difficulties created by the irresponsible holders of these original appointments. Nor in any case should the directors have the appointments at their discretion without advertisement for, and selection of, the most fitting applicant, such applications being open to the inspection of all shareholders.

After having visited the numerous mines in the district, and completed successfully the work I had been commissioned to do, I started on my return journey, passing over the road already described, but at a much faster pace, indeed, we rode the whole distance in less than thirty hours to try and catch the steamer touching at Las Tablas, on its upward journey to Ciudad Bolivar, but being disappointed in this, owing to the Government having requisitioned her for the conveyance of troops to the place of some supposed outbreak, we were compelled, on reaching Las Tablas, to hire an open dug-out native canoe, and proceed up the Orinoco to Ciudad Bolivar on her. How we succeeded in our undertaking must be told in another chapter.

\*     \*     \*     \*     \*     \*

Since the foregoing report on the mines was written, several events of importance have occurred which render it necessary for me to add a few remarks, in order to bring the position of affairs at the mining district up to the present time, fully before my readers.

First, as regards El Callao mine. A report has recently reached England that a considerable portion of this mine has fallen in. From what I saw while in the mine, I think it is very probable that some of the old workings, where the large masses of rock, called pillars, formerly left, had been too severely cut down, may have fallen in and come together; but although this sudden closing of some part of the works may have the

effect for a short time of diminishing the output, as it appears to have done, to the extent of some three thousand ounces of gold per month, yet it is of no permanent injury to the mine; the real point of Callao's future success or failure being the continued dipping, or rising of its lode. Capt. Richards reports, that at Callao Bis, water has come into the new shaft, thus rendering the sinking more troublesome.

*Union Mine.* There is also a report, lately come to hand, that on this property, now owned and worked by the El Callao Company, a new and valuable lode has been discovered, but, as yet, I have heard of no gold having been extracted from it, and until the news is confirmed from more reliable sources, I shall continue to believe that the report is circulated for the purpose of getting a better price in the market for the property, which the Chairman of El Callao is said to be in Europe trying to negotiate; as well as to effect the sale to a new Company, of Cartago and Tigre, notices of which have lately appeared in several financial papers.

*Panama Mine,* with its large capital and great works, has also, at last, found itself in liquidation. If this Company is ever to be successfully reconstituted, it must be with a very different capital, and with much more economical and efficient management, both at home and abroad.

Report also says that the Victory Company have had proposals made to them for the purchase and working,

by another Company, of half their property. There is ample room on this large and well-timbered estate, with its two thoroughly-defined lodes running through it, for two large establishments, working from sixty to one hundred stamps each, and it would be many years before either of them would feel the want of fuel. Both portions of the property have been well-surveyed, inspected, and reported on, by a number of qualified men, including General Volveider, Mr. Skertchley, the well-known explorer, Capt. Pemberthy, of El Callao Mine, the late Mr. Ness, Mr. Lambert, late superintendent of Victory, and many others, who all unite in describing the richness of the quartz, and the exceptional size and quality of the lodes.

At last it appears probable that the long-talked-of railway from Las Tablas to the mines, will be really commenced. The Duc de Morny has, I have heard, taken up the matter, and it is hoped that the first section, as far as Upata, will be laid during next year. This will necessitate making Las Tablas a port of entry for shipping, which alone will be a great boon, and an enormous saving to the population at the mining districts. I hope this time it will go beyond talking.

On October 22nd, 1886, there appeared in the *London Gazette*, and published by the authority of the British Government, the following notice, which I particularly recommend to the attention of all would-be investors in land in that part of Guyana, which is comprised within the water-shed of the Essequibo:—

“Colonial Office, Downing Street, October 21, 1886.—Whereas the boundary-line between her Majesty’s Colony of British Guiana and the Republic of Venezuela is in dispute between her Majesty’s Government and the Government of Venezuela ; and whereas it has come to the knowledge of her Majesty’s Government that grants of land within the territory claimed by her Majesty’s Government as part of the said colony have been made, or purport to have been made, by or in the name of the Government of Venezuela ; notice is hereby given, that no title to land, or to any right in, or over, or affecting any land within the territory claimed by her Majesty’s Government as forming part of the colony of British Guiana, purporting to be derived from or through the Government of Venezuela, or any officer or person authorised by that Government, will be admitted or recognised by her Majesty or by the Government of British Guiana ; and that any person taking possession of, or exercising any right over, any such land under colour of any such title, or pretended title, will be liable to be treated as a trespasser under the laws of the said colony.”

The dispute as to boundaries has been of long standing ; maintained on the side of Venezuela, with its usual impudence and disregard of truth : while, on the part of Great Britain, there has been the forbearance which usually is displayed by the stronger party when in the right. At last, however, a grant of 25,000 square miles of primeval forest, running to the bank of the Essequibo, granted by the Venezuelan Government to one Mr.

### 132 VENEZUELA: ITS MINERAL WEALTH.

Fitzgerald without either survey, plan, or even a statement of its boundaries, has decided our Government to act with firmness and decision, and the first result is the notice above-quoted.

England might fairly and equitably claim the whole watershed of the Essequibo, and this would cover the whole mining district of Guyana, but, with the forbearance they have always shown in this matter, they have confined themselves strictly within the limits, where the Dutch, from whom their title is derived, have left marks of occupation, and I have it, from undoubted authority, that the British claim will not extend beyond the mouth of the Orinoco, known as the Boca de Navios, in latitude 8°30', where still exists the remains of a Dutch fort, called Barima, from a river of the same name. From this point, the line of frontier will follow the Amicara river to a chain of mountains, touching the point of the Barima river, then from the Imataca mountain range to Acrabisi river, following the Acrabisi to the Cuyuni river, and this latter up to its source, and continuing the same line through the mountain ridge to Brazil. The total will be about 100,000 square miles, most of it untrodden by man—none of it inhabited by any Venezuelan subjects, or likely to be, under its present form of Government, for the next fifty years, while, under British rule, it will, in a short time, develop into one of its most important colonies. Covered with the finest wood, with splendid water communication to the sea, and soil that will grow anything, from sugar and tobacco to wheat and potatoes, the upper lands only require opening-out

to afford homes and occupation for thousands of our people. Any Government who takes less than the territory now claimed, will be false to their country and its best interests.



## CHAPTER IX.



**A**FTER a very sharp and fatiguing journey from Guacipati, in the course of which we rode one hundred and sixty miles in three journeys of ten hours each, we reached Las Tablas at 1.0 p.m., on Monday, May 24th, very tired, only to find that we had been deceived as to the time of the steamer touching there on its road to Cindad Bolivar. Owing to some fancied outbreak higher up the river, the authorities at Cindad Bolivar had seized all the steamboats there, including the one containing part of the machinery for the "Victory." Company, and had sent them to the scene of the supposed revolt with troops, consequently there was no boat to or from Las Tablas. There was, indeed, a rumour that it was possible a large steamer coming from Caracas might touch there in a day or two, but it was very doubtful if the Custom House officials would allow any communication with the shore.

The waiter at the hotel was very profuse in his recommendations, that our excellencies could do no better than stay where we were, until the steamer "Bolivar," from Trinidad, called there, which would be in three or four days time. As it was absolutely necessary that we should be in Cindad Bolivar by the 27th, at latest, our excellencies did not appreciate the



full force of his remarks; besides, the accommodation at the hotel was so wretched and dirty, and Las Tablas itself, such a fever den, that no person would stay there a single hour more than he was obliged. Accordingly we commenced making enquiries, and at last discovered that, occasionally, the natives did go from Las Tablas to Cindad Bolivar in their canoes, but that the passage was dangerous, and that, white men, especially strangers to the country, could not, without great risk, go in this manner. The dews and malaria on the river were dangerous, and the exposure, to sun and wet, likely to be fatal. All the same, we went from one to another, and at last found an open dug-out canoe, which was about to proceed up the river with a cargo of plantains for sale at Bolivar and the other places on the way. After some hours bargaining, we at last agreed with the owner, who was also captain, and was a one eyed negro, with a strong propensity for rum, a bottle of which was always at his side, to take us and our belongings up to Cindad Bolivar, in two days, for twenty dollars, we providing our own food, &c., and we were to start the next morning, as soon as the breeze set in. Having completed our negotiations and ordered supplies of meat, bread, and spirits to be put on board, we returned to our inn, where we were looked upon as little short of mad men. We retired, to sleep on the matter, but at midnight were awakened by the steam whistle of a large steamer. Sure enough, the steamer "Bermudas" had arrived, but, before we could get hold of the Custom House officer for a permit to go on board, she was off again, so we had to fall back on our canoe.

The next morning at 10 o'clock we went down to the beach with our luggage, and there saw our ship—an open boat, made out of the trunk of a single tree, about twenty five feet long and five wide, without a cover or shelter of any sort, with two short sticks for masts, and a curious and primitive tiller; when loaded she was about nine inches out of water, with a draught of some two feet, filled with plantains and raw hides, on the top of which we had to sit or lie as best we could; forward there was an old iron pot, in which the fire was put, to cook coffee and other victuals. The crew consisted of the one-eyed captain, another negro as mate, and two colored natives. The passengers were myself and friend, General Volveider and a servant, and when we were all on board there was not much space to spare.

From 10 o'clock till 2 p.m. we waited for a breeze, and when the long wished for wind at last began to blow, the Captain could nowhere be found. In vain we sent the police after him, and at last decided to start without him, and had really got well under weigh, when he appeared on the beach wildly gesticulating and with a bottle under each arm. We put back and took him on board, three-parts drunk, and the other part sulky. He professed to know no English, and after raving in Spanish at last declared, in that language, that he would not go. General Volveider having interpreted his determination to us, it was suggested by my friend, in English, that as the man was evidently drunk, and useless, our best course would be to throw him overboard and go on without him. Whether he had a

small corner left for English or not I do not know, but he decided to go on, so at last away we went ; our run during the afternoon was about 30 miles, crossing the place where the Caroni joins the Orinoco. The Caroni is a very swift river, and its waters are of a dark brown colour, and for many miles the waters of the two rivers can be distinguished running as it were side by side. About nine miles up this river are the celebrated falls of Caroni, which Sir Walter Raleigh visited, and where he obtained several undoubted samples of gold, and his followers collected vast quantities of pyrites which they thought was gold. These falls are of great height and volume, and their noise can be heard for many miles. In a more favourable spot they would command as many wondering visitors as Niagara.

We had hoisted two shoulder of mutton sails and a jib, and while running across the mouth of the Caroni, were caught in very nasty choppy sea. The captain, still with a rum bottle in one hand, steered, but, from the way the boat was yawing about, both my friend and myself began to entertain great doubts of his ability, and by cautious enquiries conducted by our servant among the crew, we found we were not alone in our estimate of his prowess, and we learnt that he had only just purchased the canoe, and this was his first voyage on the Orinoco, a river which is one of the most difficult to navigate, even by experienced sailors, on account of the ever changing banks and currents. Twice during the crossing of the Caroni the boat was in danger of capsizing, twice I had to put the tiller over to save her ;

on the second occasion the savage went for his knife, but a sight of my friend's revolver produced more prudent thoughts, and he contented himself with a string of Spanish oaths. At last we got across and into plain water again, but the wind failing, we pulled over to one of the islands and made fast to a fallen tree for the night. Then one of the crew proceeded to make some black coffee, and with some dried beef or tassejo, stewed in the iron pot, and some plantains and rum and water, we made a frugal supper, all sharing alike, then we lay down on the skins and tried to sleep, but sleep was impossible.

The island, luckily, was uninhabited, even by beasts; but from the distant shores rose the howls of the monkeys, the roar of the puma and panther, with the chatter and screams of thousands of birds. At last, all died away; a deep and solemn silence succeeded, while, like a pall, rose on every side the white mists, heavy with malaria, until we could not see a foot beyond the boat. For myself, I tossed and turned all the night. I felt was getting wet through, with the dew and mist, and there was no remedy but to bear it. At last, about 3 a.m., we again started, the crew using their oars and moving slowly along, till daybreak, then we stopped and had hot coffee, a most grateful refreshment to our damp and shivering bodies. I dosed my friends and myself with ten grains of quinine each, having taken the precaution to bring a supply of that drug. After breakfast, the crew again went to the oars, till about eleven,

when a welcome breeze sprung up, and hoisting our sails, we ran before it.

The breeze, at last, rose to quite a gale, and our captain, as usual, half-drunk, lost all control. The tiller slipped from his hands, or rather feet, for, half his time, he lay on his back and steered with his foot, the canoe broached to, and the gale, striking her on her side, fairly laid her down, water began to come in at the side, and I thought all was over, when the leg of mutton sail, which was old and rotten, suddenly burst in two, the canoe slowly righted, and we were saved. We all cursed the captain, who, after this, was thoroughly cowed, and did what he was told. It was a narrow escape. A little more, and we must have gone over, and that, in a place swarming with caymans and alligators; none of us, I fancy, would have survived to tell the tale. Afterwards, when talking of the escape, my friend remarked that as we had the title-deeds of a newly-purchased estate in our bags, it would have been a dreadful loss. I thought my own loss would have been much more dreadful to me.

At 4 p.m., we ran into a sort of cove to repair damages. Here we found a colored settler and his family, and the captain did some trade in bananas and skins. Sailed on till nearly dark, then made fast to the shore for supper. Same as last night, as to noises, &c., but at last, lying on the skins with an umbrella to try and keep off some of the falling dew, fell into a troubled sleep. I woke up suddenly hearing a sort of booming noise, and saw a pair of great eyes blazing very near my face, I jumped

up and heard a great splash, and then a crashing of bushes, as if some beast was landing. On examination, it turned out that we had had a visitor, but whether panther, or tiger cat, or puma, no one could tell. No more sleep after this, so we started off, rowing as usual, then breakfast at daybreak.

We hoped to reach Ciudad Bolivar to-day, so kept on urging the captain to go ahead, but he had been so frightened by the last gale, that, as soon as the wind increased a little, he ran ashore! into a sheltered spot, nor could we induce him to move, until it had dropped to a very gentle zephyr. He was evidently determined to run no more risks. However, in the course of the morning, he managed to run us aground on a mud bank, and the crew had to jump overboard, and push us off again. I repeated the dose of quinine again this morning. We were now passing through one of the most beautiful parts of the river, on either side we saw large open glades, covered with the greenest vegetation, and dotted with magnificent trees, while in the distance, rose the forest deep and dark, here and there a tapir, like a small brown cow, was to be seen, quietly grazing; birds of the most varied and beautiful plumage, stalked along, or perched on the drooping boughs; here a crane, there a falcon, again a lot of ducks. Parrots, lorries and cockatoos, screamed and chattered, while close to the water's edge, like great logs of wood, the caymans wallowed in the mud, or lay dozing with their upper jaw lifted, to catch the unwary insects entering their mouths. Wild turkeys and pheasants flew from tree to

tree, affording a good shot to the sportsman, but we did not attempt to disturb them. If they fell, we could not get them, and it would have been but useless slaughter.

During the evening of our second day, we passed several large tracts of forest-land on fire. This is a magnificent and terrible sight: the roar of the flames, the crash of the falling trees, followed by bursts of flame, many feet high, all terrify and confuse the beholders. These fires are made by the Indians and settlers, with a view to increase their clearings, and are generally done at this time, so that the rains, which are now expected, may prevent their spreading too far, but this does not always happen, and sometimes very large tracts of forest have been burnt down, and very great injury has been done to mining property on several occasions, from this cause, a great part of the woodland on which they rely for fuel, having been burnt down, through the carelessness of the natives.

The third morning came, and we started, as usual, wet and cold from the night's dews, and much disturbed by our unexpected visitor; but this day the wind failed us. No steady breeze as before, but only occasional puffs, and as the river in this part winds very much, what wind there was, was as frequently against us as in our favour. At last, in the afternoon, we got in sight of Ciudad Bolivar, although several miles away, and the captain decided upon stopping again for the night. But to this we decidedly objected, and appealed to the crew, offering double payment to

them, if they rowed us up to the city before night. They eagerly closed with our proposal, and set to work pulling with a will ; we had to keep the shore, as the current in the centre was running between five and six miles an hour ; with occasional pauses, and a slight refreshment of rum at intervals, they continued this work for hours, and at last about dusk, we reached the commencement of the city, which stretches along the river, but we could not land here, and were obliged to go on to the extreme end where alone country boats were permitted to touch the shore.

Again our captain took the helm, and in his endeavours to steer a close course, plumped us on a rock I thought we were all over. To be wrecked in sight of port, by such a one-eyed imposter was too bad. It was only the sight of several caymans swimming about that prevented us from throwing him overboard.

At last by lightening the canoe forward, and pushing with the oars, aided by the rapid current, she slowly slid off the rocks. Now came the question was she damaged under the water line, if so, we should have to swim for the shore, with small chance of reaching it. Hurrah, she is all sound and on we go, the crew pulling viciously, and the captain superseded at the helm by the mate. At last after another hour's hard work, we reach the proper landing place, but hardly are we made fast, when we are boarded by a couple of soldiers, and General Volveider is marched off a prisoner. After much negociation with an officer, my friend and I on proclaiming our nationality, are permitted to pass to our



hotel, but every thing in the boat is taken charge of, and we cannot even get our hand-bags out.

I land on the stony beach, and in the dark, grope my way up to the principal street, where our hotel stands. Crack, ping! I hear a shout in Spanish, and something whizzes by me. I push on; the hotel is only a few yards off. Crack, ping! again. I start running and soon get under shelter and up stairs to my old rooms, where our landlord welcomes me with many signs of joy. On my enquiry, as to the salute I was favored with, he informed me that for two days Cindad Bolivar had been panic stricken; soldiers were posted in the streets, with orders to arrest all who were found about after 8 p.m., and that, no doubt, it was one of these gentry, who, finding I did not answer his call to stop, had fired at me, as they are all armed with Winchester repeating rifles, I congratulate myself on my lucky escape, greatly aided, I believe, by the man having aimed at me, as they are notoriously bad shots.

We saw nothing more of the General that night, but next day he turned up at our agents, having been in confinement some hours, and eased himself considerably by abusing the military authorities all round, as a set of stupid blockheads.

I learnt afterwards that reports had been brought to the authorities at Cindad Bolivar of a serious rising higher up the river, near San Fernando, and the Governor had seized all available transports, and shipped off the greater part of the troops, at his disposal,

to suppress it. Then a report came down that there was no outbreak, and that the troops had been got away by a false pretence, to facilitate a rising in Ciudad Bolivar, so the remaining soldiers were set to work to keep down any attempt at a gathering, and as our coming up the river had somehow become known before our arrival at Ciudad Bolivar, probably by someone who saw us rowing up, General Volveider (who was a very distinguished officer in the late war) was supposed to be in some way connected with this outbreak, and so his arrest and detention was determined on. In reality, the General, as well as ourselves, was totally ignorant of the matter, he having come up at our earnest persuasion, as his presence and signature was absolutely necessary to complete the title to some property we had purchased for the Victory gold mine.


For the first time, since my arrival in the country, I was laid up by a slight attack of fever. Exposure and excitement, combined with the great heat, had at last told its tale; however, it was necessary to complete our business, so I struggled on, and after some hours with our agents, lawyers, and the other parties concerned, in which I was almost a lay figure, the business being mostly got through by my coadjutor, we got everything satisfactorily settled. Our property and titles secured, and everything paid for, nothing now remained but to take care of myself for the one or two days before the steamer started for Trinidad. After a good day's rest, my fever has gradually left me, and I saw to-day the return of the troops, who had been up the

river, and also the shipment of the remainder of the machinery for the Victory mine, and its departure for Las Tablas.

Our own boat starts for Trinidad to-morrow, Sunday afternoon, and our remaining time is occupied in settling bills, packing up, getting some curiosities, and obtaining passports, for, in this country, you must have one passport to come in, and another to go out. They are never looked at, or enquired after, when once you have got them, and the Government has pocketed the fees ; indeed, they are only a device for a little extra taxation. We have been greatly assisted in all these vexatious matters, by our agents, Messrs. Pietro, Battestini and Co., one of the largest firms in Cindad Bolivar, or indeed, in Venezuela. They are largely connected with the mining interest, having subsidiary stores all over the country, who draw all their supplies from the head centre in Cindad Bolivar, and one, if not more, of the partners in the house, hold large interests in the great El Callao Mine.



## CHAPTER X.

T last, all our work was done, and on Sunday, May 30th, at 2 p.m., we left Cindad Bolivar on our return to England, in hopes to catch the steamer at Trinidad.

I was not fully aware how many friends I had in that very hot city until the final hand-shakings took place ; among them our friends the French explorers, still confident that on the following Tuesday they would start up the river to penetrate its source.

Since our arrival at Cindad Bolivar the first time, the river has been steadily rising, and is now some 20 feet higher than when we first arrived. Its maximum height here is 80 feet, when much of the surrounding country is under water. Even now, as we proceed rapidly on our way, everything seems changed ; where, formerly, we passed large well-wooded islands, now, a few bush-like tufts rise above the water. The river seems about four times as wide, and of a yellow, muddy tint, like pea soup. Plantations, that seemed placed on hills, now come down nearly to the water's edge. The great mangrove roots, through which we peered in semi-darkness to the swamps beyond, are now quite submerged, and the foliage above seems to rise sudden and sharp out of

the great plain of water. The currents, too, are quite altered, and we seem to go along in a zigzag, aimless, sort of way, although, in reality, running our true course. At night, we touched at Las Tablas, no longer with a long stretch of sandy beach before it, but with a rapid stream rising to within some feet of its embanked street. All the way down from Bolivar, clouds of locusts were crossing the river, so dense as to obscure the sun, and threw quite a shadow over the water. These pests have, during the last three years, greatly increased, and eat up almost every green thing. It appears that this plague occurs periodically, and lasts from five to seven years; then, for a time, the country is quite free from them. At present, it seems as if they were likely to continue their ravages for the next two or three years.

Before reaching Las Tablas, the river appeared to turn quite dark, owing to the influx of the Caroni, one of its greatest tributaries, whose waters are black and thick. This river would be navigable for many miles, but for the falls, which cross it about nine miles from its mouth. They are well worthy of a visit, and fairly rival Niagara. We heard their thunder while still many miles distant, and I greatly regretted not having an opportunity of visiting them, while the river was so full of water. After delivering the goods we brought from Bolivar, at Las Tablas, an operation which took some time, owing to their having to be landed in small boats, we started off again, and reached Barrancas about 4 a.m. This is a very old town, and is the place where cattle are shipped to Trinidad. Far away into the

avannahs behind, are large cattle-breeding establishments, and from these almost continuous shipments of young beasts are made to Trinidad and other places. Four hours hard work in getting two hundred, nearly-wild, oxen on board, and away we go again. We swing our hammocks on deck, under the awning forward, to get what air there is, and lie lazily watching the numerous crooks and bends, with their ever-changing scenery, as we scurry along. Occasionally, a fishing Indian, in his canoe, starts up on seeing us, showing his stock, with some idea of barter, but we dash by unheeding. These Indians were formerly in the habit of coming on board and trading, and they were extremely expert in bringing their canoe alongside while the vessel was going full speed. Sometimes, however, one would come to grief, and being caught by the paddles, canoe and occupants got considerably mixed up, and would turn up astern in a confused mass of legs, arms, wood, and feathers, so that, at last, it was forbidden for any canoe or Indian to attempt to board any steamer while in motion.

We are now running through the Delta, with its swamps, primeval forest, wild beasts, monkeys, snakes, birds, and alligators. At night, we pass the bar, where the water is now deep enough for a man-of-war, and about 12 o'clock (noon) on the next morning, we arrive, and anchor off the Capital of Trinidad. As usual, we are delayed here for a week for the Inter-colonial Mail steamer.

We contemplate a trip to Caracas to spend the week,

but the boat left the day before we arrived, then we suggest Grenada, but the case is the same there. The only place open to us is Tobago, but that is worse than Trinidad, so we decide to stay there, and get through the week as best we may. The Governor has left for England, so Government House is closed, and lots of the inhabitants, tempted by the cheap excursion tickets of the Royal Mail Company, have gone to England to see the Exhibition, so Port of Spain is not very lively. However, it is Assize time, so we go to the Court daily, and hear the coolies and negroes give evidence and lie with a coolness, precision, and determination that fairly astonished us. One would think, to hear the prosecutor and his witnesses, in any case, that the whole matter was perfectly clear, and there could be no defence, but the defendant, when his turn came, quite as clearly proved to demonstration, and, by a quantity of independent and seemingly respectable evidence, that he was as innocent as a child unborn. I was fairly bewildered at the amount of perjury, but the Chief Justice, who presided, managed somehow, to distribute justice very fairly, at least, that was the opinion of the onlookers, who were used to the ways of the island. The Law Courts are fine buildings, well ventilated and cool. I afterwards went over the jail, through the courtesy of its Governor, and was surprised at the cleanliness and exact discipline maintained there. The prisoners, mostly black, seemed to be made very comfortable, and hard labour is only an expression.

I was, by the courtesy of several gentlemen in  
 XU

Trinidad, made a member of the club, where I passed several very pleasant evenings. At the news-rooms, also, overlooking the bay, there was a capital reading-room, with all the best papers and periodicals from England and the United States, and a daily cablegram of news.

I went to see the waterworks, a well constructed work, which keeps the town plentifully supplied with good water, and the streets clean, by water running along channels on each side of the road. Sugar estates, cacao and coffee plantations, were in turn visited. colored and coolie towns both came under notice—at the last, the native jewellers, with the aid of a portable furnace, a pair of pincers, and one or two tools, like old nails, manufactured bracelets and bangles out of the shillings supplied to them, while I looked on, the price being exactly double the weight of silver manufactured: thus, if the man made a shilling into a thin bangle, he had another shilling for labour. I proposed to him to make some gold ones, but the price was prohibitory, for a sovereign made into a bangle, I was to pay another sovereign, and he could not, or would not see the absurdity of his charge. I then proposed copper, but he cleverly escaped the dilemma by saying that he only worked in the precious metals (silver and gold). The Chinese, who also have a sort of quarter to themselves, are very industrious: they are the principal fruit and vegetable growers, and many are seen all day at work, in their little patches of ground.

I again saw the Venezuelan Generals *en retraite*, they seemed mouldier and mustier than ever, perhaps the



rainy season, which was now on, had something to do with it. While in Trinidad I had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Fabien, one of the most energetic gentlemen in the island, and a very large proprietor. He owns a considerable part of the town, where he is established as a merchant; he has large tracts of land growing cacao, coffee, limes, tobacco, and fruits; he is the owner of some of the best race-horses, and generally is to be found well to the front in every new industry. While I was there, he was endeavouring to introduce Trinidad tobacco more generally, and to that end, had started a cigar manufactory, and imported skilled workmen. I tried several samples he was kind enough to present me with, and found them quite equal in flavour to any Havannah. I understand he has sent some over to the Exhibition, and hope he may succeed in establishing a good trade in them. He has also made very large plantations of limes, as many as 30,000 trees, with a view to the manufacture of lime juice, in an improved manner, and to send the ripe fruit to England, if a market can be found for them. Those who have ever tried limes, will never use lemons, so long as the others can be obtained, the juice being much more pungent and of far finer flavour. The same gentleman is also planting chinchona and nutmegs, on his various estates, and a few more men of his stamp would have a great and beneficial influence on the future of Trinidad. Sugar is nearly played out, and with the present improved means of transit, other articles, not requiring such an outlay for machinery, will certainly become the staple produce.

## 152 VENEZUELA : ITS MINERAL WEALTH.

After a stay of six days in Trinidad, we embarked on board the Inter-colonial Mail steamer "Eden," on our return voyage to Barbadoes, accompanied to the ship by lots of friends, wishing us a pleasant voyage. The steamer was crowded with Colonials, availing themselves of the tourist tickets, at reduced fares, to visit England and the Colonial Exhibition. The food on board these steamers, and also on those from Barbadoes to England, is very inferior. In a voyage, where they touch almost daily at some place, tinned meats and canned fruits should not be used. Fruit is plentiful enough in the islands, but the commonest hog pines, wild mangoes, reeking with turpentine, and the coarsest sort of bananas only, are supplied, and these commonly stale or rotten. The cooking of the food, too, requires strict looking after. Sour bread and confectionery, which might take the place of encaustic tiles, are not good for digestion. Indeed, the entire *cuisine* and accommodation wants a regular overhauling, or the passenger traffic will pass into the hands of the Americans and Germans, who are already running the Mail Company hard. The Inter-colonial boats, too, have not the best reputation in the West Indies.

We reached Grenada the morning after leaving Trinidad, and there embarked His Excellency the Governor and suite, on a visit to St. Vincent, which we reached the same afternoon. There was the usual parody of state ceremonial; eight policemen in one boat and twelve more on shore, to fire a salute, &c., &c., to welcome the officials, who are only a nuisance and bur-

den on these state-governed colonies. Leaving St. Vincent with a fine breeze, we reached Barbadoes the next day, and, as usual, visited the town, the ice-house, &c., ate flying fish, drank punch, and went on board the Royal Mail steamer "Para," in waiting to take us to England, but when we got on board, we found, to our disgust, that we were in quarantine. It appears she had been to Colon, and there shipped a case of yellow, or, as the doctor called it, country fever, which had resulted in death. For this, she was put into quarantine, in Jamaica, where, however, she shipped some produce, but, as small pox was raging in Jamaica, and the Barbadians have a great dread of that disease, she was quarantined there for that disease. We were detained two days, while the authorities arranged how to get her stores on board, in accordance with the quarantine restrictions. This having been, at last, successfully accomplished, we started on our homeward voyage, two days behind time. We had, however, a fine passage, and at last reached Plymouth, within twelve hours of our appointed time. Here I parted with my friends, glad enough to get back to England safely and in good health.



## CHAPTER XI.—CONCLUSION.

**B**EFORE leaving my subject and taking a final adieu of my readers, I wish to add a few words in conclusion. In the foregoing chapters, I have endeavoured, to the utmost of my ability, to convey truthful impressions of what I have seen and heard. No venal report has sullied these pages; what I have said, whether good or bad, is my honest, unbiassed belief. I may have been mistaken (most men are, at times), but I have not wilfully misled anyone, and if there is more vinegar than sugar throughout the work, it is because the vices, misdeeds, and outrages, were so flagrant. Sunny land, thrice-endowed by nature, languishing under the vilest mis-Government, robbed and outraged by those of its own people, who should be foremost in its defence, who can look on thee without a fervent prayer for thy re-habilitation. Here, into thy lap, nature has poured her choicest gifts, enriching thee with every variety, that man's wants can require, of most fertile soil, and adorning thee with matchless beauties to please his senses. Here are the most magnificent forests, and noble rivers, whose prodigious grandeurs are unrivalled. Anything more rich than the luxuriant and ever-varying foliage, with every tint of flower, every fantastic shape of leaf and frond, every shade of green

on which the eye can dwell for refreshment or repose, it is impossible to imagine. The woods are literally a blaze of orange, brown, yellow, lilac, white, deep red, and flaming scarlet tints. The atmosphere seems filled with splendour. No sooner has the sun set than the air is peopled with myriads of fire-flies and luminous beetles, and insects glancing to and fro, darting their soft flashes of light from bough to bough, till they seem to illumine the entire forest—lovely by day, not only from its vegetable, but its insect wonders. The very flowers seem to have taken wing, so great the number and various the colors of the butterflies, fluttering about on their fantastic courses, and glittering in the sun, with all the varied colors of the rainbow, rose, orange, bright blue, white, black, spotted, and striped, on wings of a breadth and form unknown elsewhere, flit before the eyes, and dart through the air in endless variety: but, like the curse of misrule and oppression, with its fair-seeming and rotten core, that sits like an incubus on this fair land, here also abound the curse of all southern climes, the reptile and the insect; rattlesnake, cobra, copperhead, and a dozen other venomous and deadly snakes infest the savannahs. The boa and python dwell in the forest and the swamp, where, also, huge and noisy frogs abound. The dreaded electric eel is in every stream, mosquitos, wasps, and poisonous spiders are frequent, and even the usually small and harmless lizards here become huge, ugly, and sometimes dangerous monsters. But as these natural foes of man, fall back before the advance of cultivation, so let us hope that the equally-dangerous and predatory classes, usurp-

ing power, may be compelled to retreat before the advancing tide of knowledge and increasing civilization.

With respect to the mining district of Guyana, what is most urgently required is federation between the Companies themselves; united, they might resist all vexatious imposts and exactions of the Government; as it is, they are utterly divided, and seek more to benefit, from the misfortunes of each other, than to offer a firm and united front to the power that is an enemy to all. Callao is the chief offender in this matter, and has more than once sought by concessions, at Caracas, to establish its own supremacy at the cost of its rivals.

Since my return to England, there is one thing I have learnt, viz:—That there are an immense number of engineers and inventors, possessed of machinery, which will crush infinite quantities of gold in the least possible space of time, with results unequalled by any machinery now in use, and I would earnestly caution Directors of South American Companies to pause and consider well, before adopting any of these new and ingenious combinations. The machinery now in use, has been arrived at, after long and laborious investigation and trial. The cost of sending-out machinery (without including its cost here) is between eightpence and ninepence per pound, or from £70 to £80 sterling per ton, and failure means financial disaster. No new mine, at first starting, should try any of these so-called improvements.

It is all very well for established and large dividend paying mines, to spend some of their surplus cash in

trying what, if successful, means increased dividends, and if a failure, only a few thousands from the reserve fund, but to young and struggling companies it means ruin. The plan I have adopted, and recommend to others, is as follows.—Whenever one of these new and wonderful machines is brought before me, I offer its inventor the following terms, viz :—That the company is willing to try his machine, provided he will supply it on the condition, that, if it does not do what he guarantees, it is not to be paid for, if it does, he is to receive the price he asks, and the company will, in any case, pay the expense of sending it out ; if a failure, he must bring it home himself. In all instances, I have been told, that “ This is not business ” ; truly, it is not, if business means fees and bonuses for introduction, commissions on sales, &c., &c., and final breakdowns. My advice is, keep to the plain Californian stamp mill, till you know what you have got, then spend surpluses as you think fit. In every country there are different forms and customs of labour, and machinery of any delicate construction, in the hands of a black labourer, is like an expensive toy with a child, he is never satisfied, until he has broken it up, to see what is inside.

A species of mining, common in North America, has never been introduced into Venezuela, I mean, placer mining or washing, on a great scale. I fancy the six months dry season is against it, and further, that it is difficult, at any time, to get sufficient fall, and consequent force, for large operations, Washing by hand is common enough, and large quantities of nugget gold

are constantly obtained, but it is by individual effort, and on the banks of great rivers; the soil is brought down to the water, not the water brought down to the soil. Placer mining has this advantage over all others, that no expensive machinery is required, consequently, a very small percentage of gold pays large dividends; indeed, I know of no placer mine which has failed to pay, provided it was fairly treated. I was asked to undertake a visit to some of these mines near Denver, in Colorado, while on my journey, but I was unable to do so, much as I wished it, for I understand from very good authority, that there is a prospect of some very startling results being obtained there, from placers newly opened, or about to be opened.

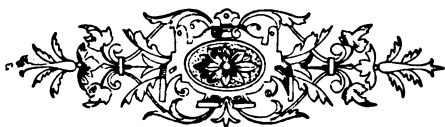
Venezuela, and more especially that part of it called the State of Guyana, where the gold mines are situated, is very little known or visited, because it is generally considered to be so difficult of access, but this is no longer so, owing to the increased facilities for travel. No more pleasant, or, indeed, cheaper trip can now be taken than a six months' tourist's ticket by the Royal West Indian Mail Steamers. For £65, the tourist can, during six months, visit Barbadoes, Antigua, Jamaica, Havannah, Vera Cruz, Panama, La Guyra and Caracas, Trinidad, St. Vincent, Grenada, Tobago, Demerara, and other islands, besides having ample time at his disposal to make trips up the Orinoco and Amazon, and visit the gold mines of Guyana and interior parts of Venezuela and other South American states.

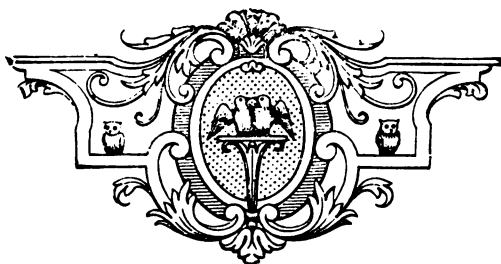
For six months, during our winter here, he can wander



among the islands, living on board the various steamers all the time, only paying extra when he goes on shore, and coming back free of the fogs and damps of at least one of our winters here, at a cost of somewhat less than ten shillings per day, and for these trips little or no outfit is required. Half-a-dozen sets of thin wool underclothes, half-a-dozen very thin flannel shirts, added to a man's general stock, will carry him through all. While his mind will be opened, and his intelligence improved by the sight of wonders, all the descriptions of which fail to give an idea of their brilliancy and beauty. Go then, idler, in search of pleasure ; valitudinarian, in search of health ; and sportsman, in pursuit of game ; see all, and on your return, acknowledge that I have "naught extenuated or aught set down in malice."

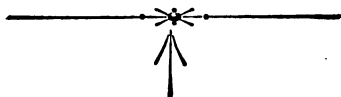
VALÉ.







# APPENDICES.



## APPENDIX A.

*Report on the Federal territory of Yuruary, Guayana, and Venezuela, by General Victor Barret de Nazaris, Minister of War and Marine, of the Government of Venezuela :—*

“Citizen-General, Constitutional President of the United States of Venezuela.

“Sir,—The mission which you had the honour to confide to my loyalty and my discretion has been fulfilled with all necessary seriousness, and with results which I believe satisfactory to the stability of the national peace, and the security of the multiplied and well-understood interests of Guayana and the Federal territory of Yuruary.

“While resident in the territory I did no more than fulfil the orders of your Government, attending with due care to your patriotic sentiments and your sincere wishes for the happiness and greatness of the country.

“My brief communications will already have informed you, as well as the Executive, of my ideas as to the condition and needs of those sections, called by Providence to great destinies in the near future. But notwithstanding these brief communications, I have considered it well, thus fully complying with my duty, to the end, to put before you in this report a compact

result of my observations, as well as the useful reforms which, according to my judgment, I deem are indispensable to the introducing of a definitive organization of the Federal territory of Yuruary, so that it may thereby fully correspond to the true ends of its creation, and reach that transcendental prosperity, in favour of which great and positive hopes will have to be developed by fruitful acts; not only for this mighty region of the Orinoco, but also for the whole of the Republic of Venezuela.

“From the foregoing I hope the Government will be able to form a correct opinion of the true political situation of the eastern portion of the Republic, the State of Bolivar, and the Federal territory of Yuruary; and if my observations, which obey no interest adverse to my duty, should meet your approbation, I shall enter, with greater satisfaction, upon the second part of my report; the most important, doubtless, as it is intimately connected with the well-known prosperity and the incalculable greatness of the mighty Delta of the Orinoco, with which the great future of Venezuela is really united.

“Taking the Federal territory of the Yuruary in its entirety, from the banks of the Orinoco to the extreme southerly limit of that part known as the mines, we clearly see that the Yuruary in its source forms a line of division nearly absolute between two groups widely different: the first on the north, in which the granite rocks abound, and the second to the south of the

Yuruary, characterised by auriferous veins more or less deep, and under different forms.

“ From the banks of the Yuruary to the confines of the territory bordering on Demerara, it may be assumed that gold abounds all over, so that we should not be far out in affirming that here really exists the long sought-for El Dorado of the Spaniards, which the industrial and ruling spirit of the age can quickly transform in a few years into a second mighty California, with advantages infinitely superior without any of its inconveniences.

“ If the opinion of masters of science is to be credited, there are not to be found in the whole world auriferous veins equal in richness to those of the Yuruary.

“ And this truth, already well known in the mining world, is precisely the reason why, in England especially, as also in all parts of Europe and the United States of North America, the attention of capitalists is being drawn more and more towards the gold region of the Orinoco, and respectable enterprises are being formed for the exploitation of the precious metals.

“ The Government, fully informed of this, considers it its first duty to devote its attention to the Federal territory, and being disposed by all the means in its power to place it in such conditions of security and positive guarantee, as will preclude all possibility of danger to capital, following a lucrative opening and progressive development about to be placed in the country.

“The confidence inspired to the outside world by the stability of the peace of the Republic is, without doubt, the principal impulse to the enterprises, and which are showing themselves disposed to favour us with eagerness.

“And if the Government succeeds in strengthening that confidence by protective measures, and a legislation fully adequate to all the rights of the territory, without any danger of disagreement, which the interpretation of not well-defined mining laws frequently give rise to, it is not to be doubted that we shall soon see large companies formed in the United States and Europe coming to the Yuruary to give life to the many wonderfully rich concessions which, unfortunately, up to the present, have remained wholly unproductive, and causing in numerous instances the ruin of their owners.

“And those laws and that necessary legislation will on the one hand favour foreign interests, and on the other tend to increase the national revenues to such an extent as to be at present beyond calculation.

“Let us now see what the position of the mining industry is to-day in the Federal territory of the Yuruary.

“According to data, which merit full credit, there are in the section of Nueva Providencia, in which the greater part of the enterprises at present in action are situated, 104 concessions of 20,060·32 mines (a mine equals 10,000 square metres, or about 2a. 1r. 35p.); in El Choco there are 30 concessions of 5,899·20 mines; in Cicapra 83 concessions, of 24,285·83 mines; in Panama four concessions, of 1,600 mines; and again there are

mines in La Victoria, Mexico, Caiguáo, without counting those whose limits are marked, as in La Erica, and the considerable number surveyed by that which was the Guyana Company Limited, to the south and east of Nueva Providencia, and towards the unexplored region.

“So that it is no exaggeration to suppose there are approximately 80,000 mines (equal to 197,500 acres, or  $308\frac{1}{2}$  square miles) in the territory which give no satisfactory results either to the concessionaires or to the Government.

“To the concessionaires they give no results, as they must pay a periodical tax to the Treasury on unproductive wealth; and as the resources of those are generally limited, the result is, the payment of the tax falls into arrears, and the concession is declared lapsed on that account; they being unable to find, within the time allowed by their resources, purchasers for their concessions who, under any form, would work them with sufficient capital; nor does the Government profit by them, because, taking for a basis the return of the revenue derived from the mines for the past financial year, from July 1, 1883, to June 30, 1884, we shall see that the amount collected for mining taxes is only 164,480 bolivares, or an amount equal to the tax on 10,965.33 mines, thus leaving 69,035 mines which pay no contribution: some of these, by having obtained a remission of the tax, others, through having been declared lapsed, and again others whose titles have not been put in order, and as many more through being unkno



“ When in view of these results, by no means satisfactory, the National Government resolves to occupy itself seriously in the decreeing of useful measures, which may save the Federal territory from the present desperate state in which it is, and in which it will continue until its present actual condition be modified, then I shall place at the disposition of the Ministry, to which such corresponds, the studies I have made, and the projects with which I am at present occupied for the consideration and superior judgment of the Executive.

“ Meanwhile, and as a preliminary basis, I beg leave to recommend the following conclusions to the Government :—

“ 1. The mining right should be thoroughly assured, with great liberality and without any restriction which might hamper its action.

“ 2. The mining tax should not be imposed upon the mine, but rather upon the yield of gold from the concession.

“ 3. The liberty to explore should be facilitated, by the National Government giving the Governor of the territory power to grant such liberty.

“ 4. The limited working of pits (“ barrancos”) should be allowed by empowering the Governor to grant permission for such workings, with the approval of the inspector of mines.

“ In fact, 1. The insecurity or even doubt of the validity of the titles of mining concessions begets want

of confidence, and consequently capitalists in Europe and the United States, the only ones who invest in the country, will not risk their money ; and to this may be attributed the present actual prostration of the Federal territory, in which, with the sole exception of El Callao, whose yield is fabulous and gives for all, all the other enterprises are battling with a million difficulties, buoying themselves up with hopes for the future.

“2. To collect taxes upon a mine from the moment a concession is granted, is nothing more than paralysing successively the action of the various concessionaires into whose hands it passes, for the money, which, as long as they have it or can borrow it, has to be paid in taxes on unproductive wealth, which might be made use of for the purpose of forming companies to work the concession, and which would then pay the Government what the concessionaire might or could not have paid, and much more besides.

“3. The greater number of the lodes discovered in the territory, according to information received, have been by poor, industrious miners, working with borrowed money. Now, as long as the law compels such men as are wont to explore to make a long and expensive journey to the capital, Caracas, in search of the necessary permission, what is now happening will continue, and that is that no one will explore ; and the consequence will be that the region of new discoveries, so important to the obtaining of new concessions and the later formation of companies, will be completely forgotten.

"4. The miners of pits ("barrancos") are in precisely the same predicament as the explorers, by being compelled to make a journey to the capital: an almost insurmountable obstacle is put in the way of getting the desired permission, and the result is that no one works pits, and, if some do, it is only secretly and in direct violation of the law.

"The foregoing conclusions, with the respective concise observations thereon, will throw sufficient light upon the pressing necessities of the territory of the Yuruary with regard to the mining industry. And were I to put forward here, as it is my duty to do, and nothing more than the plain truth, the present great stagnation prevailing in business, and in all the industries of the territory, arises from no other cause than that of crushing the mining industry by means of restrictions which our present mining legislation establishes.

"Consequently, as soon as the National Government takes such measures as will extend sure protection and guarantee to the mining enterprises, *ipso facto*, all the other industries of the Yuruary will be also favoured; and moreover the extension of the hamlets and villages surrounding the various mining companies, which from day to day have no other life than that which they now enjoy from those enterprises, will no longer depend for their existence exclusively on them.

"I shall here conclude this report, which I have tried to make as brief as possible, and shall do so by affirming

that if the National Government raises the Federal territory to that position which its great resources and importance as well as the national convenience demands, it will undoubtedly be at no far distant day the land of Venezuela's brightest hopes.

(Signed) "V. B. DE NAZARIS.

"Caracas, September 16, 1884."



## APPENDIX B.

*The Congress of the United States of Venezuela decrees :*

## CODE OF MINES.—FIRST SECTION.

Art. 1. The branch of Mines comprises especially all inorganic substances that may be worked, whether they be metallic or combustible or precious stones, in the interior of the earth or on its surface, in whatever place they may be found and whatever be the manner of working them.

Art. 2. In conformity with No. 15, Art. 13 of the Federal Constitution the Administration of the Mines is committed to the National Executive, governed by a uniform system of working according to the provisions of the present Law.

Art. 3. No mine can be worked unless an act of concession has been previously issued by the Federal Executive after all the formalities prescribed by this Law have been complied with, whether the mine be found in private lands or commons.

Art. 4. A mine is equal to a hectare or a surface of ten thousand square meters (2.47 acres). Mines are determined on the surface by fixed landmarks and lines and in depth by indefinite vertical planes.

§ 1. If one concession should be surrounded by another, the owner of the latter is entitled to continue the working of the vein which being struck on his concession continues through the enclosed land, until he reaches the other part of his own. The damages arising therefrom will be fixed by experts.

§ 2. With regard to coal-mines the surface of one square kilometer (250 acres) shall constitute a concession or mine.

Art. 5. Besides the concessions of mines defined in the preceding article, small concessions called "*barrancos*" will be made for the working of the mines.

Art. 6. A *barranco* will be equal to a rectangular solid of 10 meters in length and 10 in breadth, horizontal measurement, and of indefinite vertical depth.

Art. 7. Mining concessions cannot be granted for less than four mines, nor more than twenty-five in waste-lands or commons; and the vein or veins of any of these concessions will be worked by the grantees along their entire inclined length or depth, without limitation and undisturbed by anybody under any pretext whatever.

Art. 8. Concessions for the working of mines in waste-lands or commons cannot be granted for more than ninety-nine years, nor for less than fifty; these concessions constitute a perfect right of property, and the grantees, their heirs and assigns will be entitled to preference on claiming the renewal of their rights whenever the terms of the concession shall expire.

Art. 9. The small concessions called *barrancos* will be granted for undetermined periods, but their respective patents must be annually renewed.

Art. 10 The mines are considered to be immovable property as well as the machines, apparatus and all that may be placed and established by the worker in order to work and improve the mines.

#### SECOND SECTION.

Art. 11. Whoever intends to work mines shall give notice to the President of the State or Governor of the territory, of the place wherein he has discovered the mines, in order to have them entered on the register kept for the purpose in the Secretary's Office of the said Functionaries.

Art. 12. The petitions for concession of mines will be entered in the order of their presentation on the register mentioned in the preceeding Article, and the day and hour of their presentation will be noted down : and these formalities having been gone through, they will be published once in the Official Gazette of the State or Territory, or, in default of this, in the newspaper having the greatest circulation, and in case of there being no such newspaper it will be sufficient to post handbills or advertisements during thirty days in the Municipality wherein the mine is situated.

Art. 13. Those who believe themselves entitled to oppose the petitions for concessions of mines presented by others in virtue of the preceding Articles, may

deliver their own petitions to the President of the State or to the Governor of the Territory. These petitions will also be registered in the order of their delivery, and the day and hour on which they were presented shall be noted ; and the only notice given to the parties interested will be by publishing the counter-petitions three times in the course of one month in the Official Gazette or by posting the handbills and advertisements mentioned in the preceding Article.

Art. 14. At the end of the thirty days and after all the formalities prescribed by the preceding Articles have been complied with, the President or Governor, as the case may be, will decide on the petitions for concessions, keeping in view the merits of the counter-petitions in case there are any.

Art. 15. After this decision no opposition will be admitted, and the successful party or parties shall be authorized by the respective President or Governor to begin and carry on the exploration and other preparatory acts until the documents are ready to be examined in order to grant or refuse the concession, notice thereof being given to the National Executive.

Art. 16. All petitions for mining concessions presented to the President of the State or Governor, as the case should be, must express the number of mines applied for, the District, Municipality or Settlement where they are situated, whether they are in private lands, commons or waste-lands and the name of the Engineer or Land-Surveyor who is to make the measurements



and plans, and these shall be made after previous notice of them has been given and published in the press for the knowledge of the adjoining owners who have the right to be present at the act. Surveys made by titulary Engineers and Land-Surveyors, and no others, will be admitted as authentic, nor will any others have legal effect with regard to measurements and plans in mining documents.

Art. 17. After making the measurements according to the established form, the plans and all that may have been done in the matter shall be delivered to the Inspector of Mines to be verified by him and then transmitted by the President of the State or Governor of the Territory, together with the Inspector's Report, to the Ministry of Fomento (Progress).

Art. 18. The Engineers or Surveyors shall be responsible for any damages caused by faults or inaccuracies in the performance of their duties.

Art. 19. The documents being thus prepared, the Federal Executive will decide upon them whether the concession asked for shall be granted or not. In case of an affirmative decision the Executive will order the proper title-deed to be issued and it will be issued by the President of the Republic in the following form :

THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC,

Whereas it appears that Mr. N. N. (or the firm of N. N.) has petitioned the Government for the concession of (so many) mines of the dimensions determined by

Art. 4 of the Law (of such date) the boundaries thereof being, according to the respective plan, as follows: (state the boundaries); and considering that the requisite explorations, measurements, demarkation and other corresponding acts have been performed so far as to have obtained a grant: declares with the affirmative vote of the Federal Council, in favor of N. N., his heirs and assigns, the concession of (so many) mines in the State (or Territory)....., District....., to which the documents already examined and marked No..... refer. The present Title-Deed will be registered at the Registry of the place where the mines granted are situated, and it entitles the grantee and his heirs to make use and have the enjoyment of said mines for a term of (so many) years, while he complies with the conditions prescribed in Articles 28, 29, 35 and 37 of the already mentioned Decree.

§ Should the mine be applied for by the owner or proprietor of the land, it will be sufficient for him to present the title-deeds and plans in order to obtain the concession, and in this case the number of mines may be unrestricted so as to cover the whole land.

Art. 20. The small concessions called *barrancos* must be applied for to the Inspector of Mines, and in default of the Inspector to the first Civil Authority, stating the number applied for and the place where they are situated.

The Inspector will determine on the spot the *barranco* or *barrancos* asked for, and will forward the respective

petition together with his report to the President of the State or Governor of the Territory who may grant or refuse the concession.

Art. 21. The Inspector or first Civil Authority will determine on the spot the *barranco* or *barrancos* asked for and will grant the respective patent in favor of the interested party. This patent shall be registered in a book kept for this purpose by the said Functionary.

Art. 22. If opposition is made or better rights are alleged by any one at the moment of giving possession the Inspector will decide what he thinks just after having considered precedents.

It shall be stated on the margin of the patents of concession whether possession was given or whether the patent was declared null.

Art. 23. The lawful possession of a *barranco* shall be proved only by the patent and copy of title-deed issued in presence of the adjacent owners.

### THIRD SECTION.

Art. 24. Whoever shall have supplied any sums of money for explorations and discovery of any mine, as well as for works, machines and construction of buildings, will have a right of mortgage on the mine. In order to render this mortgage efficient, the document must be registered in the Registry of the same locality, stating the exact amount of the sums advanced and the object for which they were employed.

Art. 25. The possession of the soil and subsoil goes

with the concession of a mine and whenever the concession of the mine shall be made to any other than the owner of the surface, the grantee must obtain the owner's express consent; and in case that they do not come to an agreement, expropriation shall follow in the form prescribed by Law.

§ 1. Should the grantees of mines who purchase the surface, make use of woods for the service of the mine, the property acquired by them shall not be charged with any national or sectional tax whatever.

§ 2. All the grantees who, until the promulgation of the present Law, have held concessions of mines in waste-lands or commons, may become proprietors of the surface by paying in cash forty *bolivares* (francs), for each hectare (2.47 acres); and the surveys possessed by them, and already approved by the Federal Executive, will serve for the demarkation of the lands they purchase. The corresponding title-deeds shall be issued in conformity with the said surveys.

Art. 26. The deed of concession shall be registered in the Registry of the place where the mine or mines, to which the said deed refers, are situated.

Art. 27. A fixed term of one year, counting from the day on which the permission or authorization mentioned in Article 15 of this Decree shall have been granted, shall be allowed for the preparation of mining documents, that is explorations, measurements and surveys so that they may be presented in due form to the end expressed in Article 19.

Should the indicated documents not be presented before the end of this term the petition shall be considered null and void and in that case new applications for the mine or mines included in the extinct petition may be received.

Art. 28. The grantee must begin the working of the mines conveyed to him within two years from the date of concession, which may be extended to one year more should the National Executive determine to do so with a thorough knowledge of the case.

Art. 29. Should the term fixed in the preceding Article and the extension of time, if any has been asked for and obtained, expire before the mines have begun to be worked, the title shall be forfeited and the concession shall be declared null and void against the grantee who has not performed his engagements.

§ The forfeiture will not take place if the machines are set up and the working of the mine has begun, whatever be the number of mines comprised in the concession.

Art. 30. The small concessions called "*barrancos*" must be worked within four months from the date of the respective patent, which will otherwise become null and void.

#### FOURTH SECTION.

Art. 31. Any person of whatever nationality, legally qualified to contract, may solicit the right to work the mineral lands which are under the control of the Federal Executive.

Art. 32. The right of applying for the working of mines is granted to individuals and Companies, and the Companies may be Corporations, Partnerships or in "*Commandite*" (*Anónimas, Colectivas ó en Comandita*) National or Foreign, and they may have their domicile in Venezuela or abroad.

Art. 33. National or Foreign Companies having their seat in Venezuela must be formed and constituted according to the regulations of the Commercial Code.

Companies in "*Commandite*" or Joint-Stock having their seat out of Venezuela and wishing to work mines, must comply in a precise manner with the formalities enacted by Art. 224 of the Commercial Code before beginning the works; and must also legally appoint an agent or attorney who will represent them and will be directly answerable for the obligations contracted by the said Companies in Venezuela. The agent's or attorney's power must always be registered in the Register of the respective Commercial Court, and shall be published in full in the Official newspaper or in some other belonging to the jurisdiction of the Commercial Court where the Registration is to be made.

Should the Companies in "*Commandite*" or Joint-Stock, organized and resident in a foreign country, neglect to comply with the conditions prescribed in the preceding paragraph, the agencies or establishments constituted by them in the Republic shall be considered independent for all legal purposes.

Art. 34. Any properties, rights or shares possessed

by Foreign Companies in this country are directly answerable for the operations and transactions of the agents of the said Companies in Venezuela, in regard to the business of said Companies.

#### FIFTH SECTION.

Art. 35. From the date on which a concession of mines is issued, the grantee shall pay a yearly contribution of fifteen *bolivares* (francs) for each mine; and as soon as the mills are erected he shall pay annually a further sum of one thousand five hundred *bolivares* (francs) for each five-stamp mill employed in trituration, and no other national or sectional tax will be imposed on it, nor on the mines, nor on the products, during the time of the concession.

If any other machinery or apparatus than the mills be used, the grantee or his assignees shall pay an annual contribution of one thousand *bolivares* (francs) for each machine or apparatus employed in his works.

§ The Inspector of Mines will inform the Executive, through the Ministry of Fomento (Progress), of the date on which the grantee has set up his mills, machines or apparatus, stating their number and how many stamps each is composed of; the Inspector will see to this with due vigilance and shall be responsible for any fault of delay in his report.

Art. 36. The taxes prescribed in the preceeding Article shall be paid in cash, each quarter in advance and within the first eight days of said quarters, and the

payment shall be made at the respective Collector's Office determined by the Federal Executive.

§ Fractions of mines acquired in virtue of former laws shall pay the duty corresponding to a whole mine.

Art. 37. The grantees of *barrancos* shall pay for each *barranco* thirty *bolivares* (francs) per year each quarter in advance to the Intendant of Finances in the Federal Territory Yuruary, and at the Office determined by the Federal Executive in other parts of the Republic.

§ Coal-mines are exempt from all contributions.

Art. 38. The non-payment of the contributions established in Article 35 of the present Law renders the grant void if said omission is repeated for two consecutive quarters. In this case the declaration of nullity pertains to the Courts of Justice after the hearing of adverse parties with all the formalities of civil proceedings.

#### SIXTH SECTION.

Art. 39. All mining documents, from the petition to the resolution ordering the title of concession to be issued must be in triplicate, one copy to remain at the Ministry of Fomento (Progress), another at the Registry where the title has been registered in order to serve as a voucher, and another to be placed together with the original title in the hands of the grantee.

Art. 40. The grantees must lay out at their own cost the boundaries of their concessions. This shall be done by means of paths two meters wide, placing at the angles masonry pillars or squared wooden posts



three decimeters in diameter, and on each one the number of the concession bounded by it and the grantee's initials.

Art. 41. As soon as the grantees of mines have opened the paths mentioned in the preceding Article, they shall give notice to the Inspector of Mines so that he may ascertain whether the provisions of said Article have been complied with or not and inform the Ministry of Fomento (Progress) of the result of his inspection.

The Inspector is entitled to a fee of one *bolívar* (franc) for each mine examined by him and this fee shall be paid by the grantee.

Art. 42. The concessions of barrancos shall be bounded at their angles by posts which shall be placed by the grantee.

Art. 43. The paths that bound the concessions must be cleared or cleaned once every year; and the pillars or posts, if missing, must be replaced and marked with the initials of the grantee as prescribed by Article 40.

§ The grantees of mines who shall not strictly comply with the provisions of this Article shall pay a fine of five hundred *bolívares* (francs) which will be collected by the respective Collector's Office as soon as the Inspector informs the Federal Executive of the breach of Law.

#### SEVENTH SECTION.

Art. 44. Those who have obtained concessions of

mines by virtue of provisions of Law prior to the present Decree and whose titles have been revised and confirmed by the National Executive in conformity with the Decree of 15th November 1883, shall remain in full and legal possession of their rights by virtue of their title-deeds. Those titles which have not been confirmed in conformity with the aforesaid Decree are considered inchoate and the interested parties shall comply with the formalities prescribed by the present Law in order to have their titles finally confirmed.

#### EIGHTH SECTION.

Art. 45. When two or more Companies or persons apply for the concession of the same mines, preference will be given in the following order.

1st. To the owner of the surface.

2nd. To the discoverer of the mines if proved as such; but should two or more dispute the discovery, he who furnishes the best proof of his rights shall be preferred.

3rd. To the national or foreign individual or Company who offers the largest capital for the business; and

4th. To those who have incurred expenses for measurements and plans in virtue of concessions, although these may have been rendered void by the expiration of the grant's term.

#### NINTH SECTION.

Art. 46. Concessions of mines may be totally or

partially transferred according to the following rules:

1st. The Federal Executive must be informed of the transfer.

2nd. Should the transfer consist of a concession of four mines, the said concession cannot be divided and must be totally transferred: and

3rd. Should the conveyance consist of a concession of more than four mines, then it may be partially transferred with the only restriction that no lot can be composed of less than four mines this being the minimum established for all concessions.

§ Concessions of less than four mines granted in virtue of former legislation, may nevertheless be conveyed.

Art. 47. The acquirer shall pay for the transfer of mining concessions four *bolívares* (francs) for each mine, and this tax will be received at the Collector's office of the mining circumscription.

In the conveyances mentioned in the § of Article 46, fractions of mines shall pay as much as whole mines.

#### TENTH SECTION.

Art. 48. Companies formed for the working of mines must adopt regulations for their works, and will present them for approval to the Federal Executive.

These regulations shall be delivered to the Inspector of Mines, who will transmit them, together with his report, to the Ministry of Fomento (Progress).

Art. 49. The regulations mentioned in the preceding Article shall be presented to the Federal Executive one month at least before being put in force; and every reform made in said regulations must also be submitted to the Federal Executive.

Art 50. The person or Company who works mineral lands without having acquired them in the manner herein established, shall pay a fine of ten thousand *bolivares* (francs) besides the damages that may be caused. The fine will be imposed by the Inspector of Mines, and in this case the works established in violation of the rules shall be stopped and notice will be given to the Federal Executive.

#### ELEVENTH SECTION.

Art. 51. Questions relating to servitudes in mining concessions shall be governed and determined in conformity with the provisions of the Civil Code.

Art. 52. The damages caused by the works of one or more mines to other Companies or persons shall be determined according to the ordinary rules of Law.

Art. 53. Works of investigation or exploration are forbidden in public buildings or roads, in the interior of squares and of towns and villages, and also in private buildings and lands the gardens and surroundings thereof, within a radius of one hundred meters, the proprietor alone having a right to execute such works.

Art 54. The Federal Executive has a right to name, at any time it may find convenient, special inspectors

for mining enterprises and will determine their functions as well as the term of their employment.

Art. 55. In proportion as mining enterprises increase in the country, the Federal Executive will establish the necessary circumscriptions in order to render more expeditious the general administration of mines. Each circumscription will comprise the mines that are worked in each State of the Federation; and in Federal Territories the respective mining circumscription will comprise in its jurisdiction the Territory itself.

#### TWELFTH SECTION.

Art. 56. The Inspectors of Mines, named by the Federal Executive in conformity with this Decree will discharge the following functions :

1st. Publish notice of surveys to be made as stated in Article 16 of the present Decree.

2nd. Make the report mentioned in Article 17.

3rd. At the end of each month inform the Executive of the state of the mines worked within their respective jurisdictions; and mention in the report the system of work adopted.

4th. See that the contributions established in the present Decree are duly paid.

5th. Promote the nullification of concessions whenever the grantees leave off paying the taxes they are obliged to pay, as well as in the other cases determined by this Decree.

6th. See that the works in the mines do not, under any circumstance, endanger the lives of workmen, and for this purpose the Inspectors may order examinations to be made and even stop the works whenever they think fit to do so, and they will submit to the approval of the Federal Executive whatever they do in this regard.

7th. See that all the enactments contained in this Decree are obeyed and oblige the grantees to keep clean the paths that bound their concessions and also keep clean, well drained, ventilated and strengthened the galleries wherein the works are carried on.

8th. Give notice to the respective first Political Authority of the slight offences that occur in the mines, and demand assistance so that his orders may be carried into effect.

9th. Inform the Ministry of Fomento (Progress) of all the transfers of mining concessions made according to this Decree.

10th. Demand the execution of Articles 48 and 49 of the present Decree in order to see that the Companies started for working mines present their respective Regulations to be forwarded to the Federal Executive.

11th. Prevent any disorder among the workmen in the mines and protect the mines against mutinies or riots. In such a case the Inspectors will demand assistance from the first political Civil Authority of the place, and as soon as order is re-established they will submit

the matter to the competent Judicial Authority so that it may proceed in conformity with the Laws relating to the case.

12th. See that the salaries of the workmen are duly paid, and that nothing shall be retained from what is due to them, unless it be for motives expressed in the Regulation of works approved by the Federal Executive.

13th. Send to the Ministry of Fomento (Progress) at the end of every six months a report containing the statistics of the mines within their jurisdiction, and all that may lead to the improvement of the administration of this branch and to the removal of the difficulties found in practice.

14th. Send to the Ministry of Fomento (Progress) a monthly account of the gross product of mining works under their inspection.

Art. 57. Any person infringing the rules herein enacted for the good order of the mines shall be proceeded against in a brief and summary manner by the Inspector who will inform the Federal Executive of each case that occurs and his report will be approved or rejected as may be according to its value, and the original of this report will be kept at the disposal of the Ministry of Fomento (Progress).

Art. 58. The Inspectors of Mines will have a salary assigned to them by the National Executive besides the fees for examinations to which they are entitled according to Article 41 of the present Decree.

## THIRTEENTH SECTION.

Art. 59. Gratuitous concessions granted by virtue of former legislation and not worked in due time, are considered null and void or shall become so at the time fixed in Article 29.

Art. 60. Void concessions shall be considered as free lands and will under no circumstance be added to concessions granted by contract.

Art. 61. The Decree of 15th November 1883 relating to mines and all previous National or State Legislation on this subject is hereby repealed.

Given at the Palace of the Federal Congress at Caracas on the 21st of March 1885, in the 22nd year of the Law and on the 27th year of the Federation.

The President of the Senate.

R. GONZALEZ.

The President of the Chamber of Deputies.

DOMINGO A. CARVAJAL.

The Secretary of the Senate.

M. Caballero.

The Secretary of the Chamber of Deputies.

J. Nicomedes Ramírez.

Federal Palace at Caracas on the 23rd of May 1885, 22nd year of the Law and 27th year of the Federation.

Let it be executed.

JOAQUIN CRESPO.

Countersigned.

The Minister of Fomento.

JACINTO LARA.



## APPENDIX C.

*Extract from report by Vice-Consul Reddan of the Trade and Commerce of the Port and Great State of Bolivar, and of the Five Federal Territories, Alto, Orinoco, Amazonas, Caura, Delta, and Yuruary for the years 1883 and 1884.*

Previous to the year 1881 the Republic of Venezuela, which occupies the northern part of South America, was composed of twenty States, one Federal district, one colony, and four Federal territories.

The total area of the above-mentioned States, &c., was estimated at 439,119 square miles, and entire population at 2,075,245 inhabitants, or about 4.06 souls to the square mile.

On the 27th of April, 1881, the constitution of the Republic was reformed by Act of Congress, and in conformity with the new constitution the political division of the country was reduced from the above-mentioned twenty States, one Federal district, one colony, and four Federal territories, to eight great States, one Federal district, two colonies, and eight Federal territories.

From the data given in statistical annuary of the new territorial political division of Venezuela, it appears that the area of the Republic has increased from 439,119

square miles in the year 1881 to 632,705 $\frac{1}{2}$  square miles in the year 1884, or somewhat more than one-third. The writer of this report is unable to account for this great increase of territory in the Republic, as he is unaware of any recent survey of Venezuela having been made in any other way than by supposing that the area of the various territories in dispute between Venezuela and the countries of Brazil, British Guayana, and the United States of Colombia, has been added to the amount previously given as the area of the country. The population has also increased from 2,075,245 in 1881 to 2,121,988 inhabitants in 1884, showing an increase of 46,743 souls during the past two years.

That the supposition expressed in regard to the present extent in square miles of Venezuela is not altogether unfounded may be judged from the map of the Republic, specially got up in connection with the before-mentioned "Statistical Annuary" of President Guzman Blanco, and which shows with greater clearness the new territorial political division of the country, described as Central States, comprising Guzman Blanco and Carabobo; eastern, Bermudez; western, Lara, Falcon, Los Andes, and Zamora; and the southern, Bolivar, with its five immense territories. The above-mentioned Central, Eastern, Western, and Southern States may be considered as the four great territorial divisions into which the Republic of Venezuela, not alone politically, as it is, but also from an industrial and commercial point, may be said to resolve itself.

The Southern or Great State of Bolivar, and the five

immense Federal territories, are comprised between the parallels  $1^{\circ}$  and  $8^{\circ}$  north latitude, and  $61^{\circ}$  and  $71^{\circ}$  south longitude, and are bounded on the north and north-west by the States of Bermudez, Guzman Blanco, Zamora, Los Andes, and the United States of Colombia; on the south-west by the United States of Colombia; and on the south and south-east by Brazil and British Guayana, and occupy the whole of the southern part of Venezuela, being situated principally on the right banks of the Rivers Orinoco and Apure.

The area of this mighty region is estimated, according to the "Statistical Annuary," at no less than 428,376 square miles, or more than two-thirds of the entire of Venezuela; and its population is given by the same authority at 822,768 inhabitants, or somewhat more than one person to the square mile.

It may, however, be safely affirmed, notwithstanding all that has been written about the former province of Guayana and the valley of Orinoco, allowing at the same time all due consideration to the data published recently in the "Statistical Annuary," compiled by order of President Guzman Blanco, that comparatively little is known either of the geography, history, or productions of this the most important section of the Republic of Venezuela.

Very few, indeed, outside of Guayana, unless they be South American travellers of some notoriety, have any idea that this State and the five Federal territories therein included have an area three and half times

greater than that of Great Britain and Ireland; that the climate, in general, though exhibiting in the highest degree both the equatorial and tropical character, is by no means so unhealthy as is generally believed, but rather salubrious; that they are watered by the magnificent flow of the Orinoco and other great rivers, whose sources, imperfectly known, lie far away in the unknown and untrodden regions of the great Empire of Brazil and the United States of Colombia; that the Orinoco forms the highway of communication of the whole of the Republic, uniting, as it does, the northern to the southern part; that the Orinoco and its tributaries form a network of internal navigation, unrivalled in any other country on the face of the globe, and flow through thousands of miles of virgin forests, teeming with the most precious woods, through the vast Federal territories abounding in varied and innumerable tropical productions, through immense plains on which numerous herds of cattle roam, through soils of the richest fertility, though different zones of great heat, a genial spring-like temperature, and extreme cold; that the flora and fauna of the valley of the Orinoco is unrivalled, though but known in a very limited manner; that the mineral resources are immense, as shown by the production of nearly 2,000,000 ozs. of very fine standard gold, from a small corner of one of the territories, embracing not more than a twelve mile circumference; and lastly, that this mighty region may be considered as a vast solitude, very little of it being either cultivated or settled.

There is no doubt that the State of Bolivar and its

five Federal territories must be regarded as the most important in Venezuela. It is by far the largest and, as already observed, is permeated by the magnificent flow of the Orinoco, by which and its tributary rivers the whole continent of South America might almost be crossed from east to west, being joined on the southwest by the River Meta, to within three days' journey of Bogota, capital of the United States of Colombia; while on the south it is joined by the Casiquiare to the Rio Negro and the Amazon, thus rendering the Empire of Brazil accessible to ships from the coasts of Venezuela; and again, as already noted, on the north uniting the whole of the States of the Republic, and forming the grand highway of communication to all the interior of Venezuela. Indeed, it might be said with truth that the River Orinoco, which principally flows through the State of Bolivar and the Federal territories therein, is the key to the whole of the vast continent of South America; and it requires no great stretch of imagination to suppose that the commerce which will one day be developed in this State and the Federal territories by means of this noble river will unquestionably be of vast importance. The State of Bolivar is divided for its administration into districts and municipalities.

The criminal returns of the State for the year 1883 speak well for its morality. Only 92 criminal cases came before the various tribunals of the entire territory, of which number 24 were for murder, the remainder for less grave offences.

Cindad Bolivar, formerly known as Angostura, and

capital of the former province of Guayana, has become since the year 1881 the capital of the great State of Bolivar, and is the port of entry for the whole of the southern part of Venezuela.

It is situated on the right bank of the river Orinoco, in latitude  $8^{\circ} 5' N.$ , and  $62^{\circ} 41' W.$  longitude. Its height above the level of the sea is about 187 feet, from which it is distant 395 English Miles.

The city is built upon a hill of solid rock, and commands an extensive view of the Orinoco and the wide-stretching plains on both sides of the river. The streets run at right angles and parallel to the Orinoco, but are very steep and wretchedly paved. It contains a handsome cathedral, being the see of a bishop, built in the time of the Spanish colonists, and restored and beautified some years since by a former president of Guayana. There is also a large and spacious Government house, in which a fine collection of documents relating to the history of this section of the Republic are kept in excellent order ; a Federal college of the first class, one of the first founded in the country, and which possessed a respectable revenue derived from the lands of the former missions of Guayana until last year, when the national Government took the direction of the college under its own administration : it has a decent library, and under the direction of a staff of competent professors about 128 boys receive a good liberal education ; a public square well kept, in which a noble statue of the Liberator, Bolivar, stands on a handsome marble pedestal—this

was the first monument raised in honour of the hero of the country in Venezuela, and was erected during the presidency of Mr. J. B. Dalla Costa in the year 1869; two hospitals, one for men, the other for women; a masonic lodge, an excellent market-place very poorly supplied, together with a beautiful and remarkably well-kept cemetery, to which a smaller one is attached, equally well looked after, and which is destined for the interment of deceased foreigners and others not professing the Roman Catholic religion.

The Orinoco, whose general breadth in front of the city does not exceed from 1,200 to 1,500 yards, narrows considerably near the ancient forts of San Gabriel and San Rafael, and may be said not to exceed 850 yards from bank to bank.

Here also rises in the middle of the mighty stream the immense rock called "Piedra del Medio," surmounted by a large cross. Notwithstanding the great annual rise of the river, which may be calculated at from 45 to 60 feet, this rock has never been completely covered. It serves as an excellent meter to gauge the rise of the Orinoco.

Cindad Bolivar is the entrépot of the commerce of the Orinoco, Barcelona, Guarico, Portuguesa, Zamora, the south-east part of the United States of Colombia by the River Meta, and the north central part of Brazil by the Casiquiare, as well as the State of which it is the capital, and the five Federal territories therein included.

## IMPORTS.

These consist of British French, German, and American manufactured goods; French, Spanish, and Italian wines, oils, and fruits; German beer and fancy articles; and from the United States flour—of which from 12,000 to 15,000 barrels are annually imported—lard, cheese, rice, tinned provisions, together with large quantities of machinery, principally for the gold mines of the Yuruary. Provisions are also imported from the Island of Trinidad, not, however, in any large quantity, as the obstacle of 30 per cent. extra duty renders trade with that colony rather unprofitable at present.

The following table shows the total value of imports in bolivares or francs, the duties paid thereon, and countries whence imported at this port, for the years 1883 and 1884:—

Names of Countries.	Year 1883.	Year 1884.	Total Duties Paid in 1883.	Total Duties Paid in 1884.
	Bolivares.	Bolivares.	Bolivares.	Bolivares.
Trinidad	6,407,678·67	4,974,797·83	...	...
Great Britain	386,845·94	...	...	...
Germany	1,971,321·99	3,383,051·53	...	...
France ...	1,172,146·44	800,300·00	...	...
Italy ...	126,856·00	...	...	...
Demerara	...	5,623·20	...	...
United States	2,207,352·54	2,597,485·59	...	...
Total	12,272,202·08	11,761,258·40	3,342,008·83	3,683,105·58
Or About	£490,888 1s. 6d.	£470,450	£133,680 7s. 6d.	£147,324 4s. 6d.

From the above returns it will be seen there is a decrease of 510,943 bolivares 85 fr., or about £20,437 15s. 6d., in the value of imports for the year 1884, as compared with that of the year 1883. This, however,



is not due to any falling off in the imports of general merchandise, but rather to the fact that less coined gold has been introduced for the use of the English mining companies established in the Federal territory of Guayana. All considered, however, I am inclined to believe that quite so much, if not more, specie has been brought here in 1884 than in 1883, but as it pays no duty the Customs authorities do not trouble themselves as to the way it may be introduced: though, it is to be observed, the high freight of  $\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. charged from Trinidad to this port by the Orinoco line of steamers may have something to do with the introducing of it.

Though at least half the manufactured goods imported are British there is no direct trade with Great Britain; nor is there more than one English commercial house established here, all the trade being in the hands of French and German merchants, and British manufactures are brought here in vessels with assorted cargoes from Germany.

It is satisfactory to observe, however, that though the exact value of the total amount of imports from Great Britain is not to be attained, the amount coming through and from the British colony of Trinidad, notwithstanding the great obstacle put in the way of direct trade with that island and this section of Venezuela of 30 per cent. extra duties on all goods directly imported therefrom, is far in excess of the value of imports from any other nation to Cindad Bolivar; indeed, the amount is nearly equal to that of all the other countries put together.

The annexed table shows the total amount in value of imports from all countries to this port, and the duties paid thereon for the following financial years :—

Year.				Value of Imports.		Duties Paid.	
				£	s. d.	£	s. d.
1873 and	1874	...	...	117,016	4 0	47,281	0 8
1874	1875	...	...	193,854	0 0	88,918	17 0
1875	1876	...	...	385,750	0 0	85,384	1 0
1876	1877	...	...	308,383	0 0	81,999	2 6
1881	1882	...	...	162,956	4 2	109,542	15 0
1882	1883	...	...	466,672	4 10	142,738	10 6
1883	1884	...	...	551,830	0 0	139,395	3 4

The increase in the trade of this port is clearly shown from the above table; and it will be further apparent, if we consider that the total value of imports for the 10 years, from the year 1850 to 1859, was only £863,593, of which amount £303,729 came from Great Britain and the colonies, and for the 10 years from 1860 to 1869, £894,153, of which £183,633 came from Great Britain and the colonies. It is much to be regretted that it was by no means possible to obtain the return of the value of imports for the few years from 1870 to 1879, no data respecting such existing in this city. But taking the above-mentioned seven financial years we shall find that they give the respectable total of 2,486,461 13s., or nearly one-half as much again as the total amount in value imported during the 20 years from 1850 to 1869; and of this amount it is no exaggeration to state that fully three-fourths came from Great Britain and the colonies.

It is but fair to acknowledge, however, that notwith-

standing the reliable sources from which the foregoing data were attained, I am unable to credit them as satisfactory, being fully assured they by no means represent the true and correct figures.

There is no doubt whatever but that the trade and commerce of this section of Venezuela has increased to a very great extent during the past thirty years; and this increase is principally due to the development of the gold mines of Guayana.

#### EXPORTS.

The exports consist of gold in bars and nuggets from the Federal territory of Yuruary; Tonquin beans, the fruit of the *Dipteris odoratu*, of a peculiarly agreeable odour, found in a wild state and growing abundantly in the immense forests of the territory of the Caura; tobacco, cotton, cocoa, coffee, and indigo, from the State of Zamora, on the left bank of the Orinoco; cotton from the State of Portuguesa, but not of so good quality as that of Zamora; cattle from Guarico, Barcelona, and Maturina; hides, deer skins, wild animal skins, balsam copaiba, turtle oil, fish, cheese, and various other articles from all parts bordering the River Orinoco; and from Rio Negro and the United States of Colombia considerable quantities of grass cables, chiquichique, caoutchouc, mahogany, coffee, hammacks, and vegetable oils arrive at this market, where they find little difficulty in being disposed of.

The gross value of exports for the year 1883 was £815,883, and that of the year 1884 was £1,006,558,

which, as compared with the year 1883, shows the large increase of £190,675 in the export trade. Though this increase is principally due to the greater yield of gold from the mines in the year 1884, it cannot be denied the crops of cotton, coffee, tobacco, &c., were very good, and the exports of hides and cattle considerably in excess of the year 1883.

It may be said that the years 1883 and 1884 have been the two most favoured years, both in regard to the import as well as the export trade, that the State of Bolivar has experienced.

And if, as it is to be hoped and expected from the report made by the Minister of War, who visited this State in July last, the National Government turn their attention to the great wants of this State, and do something to lessen the many difficulties under which it at present labours, particularly in regard to the nearly insuperable obstacles placed in the way of the trade and commerce of this section, by far the most important in Venezuela, there need be no fear that not only will the trade of the past two years be well sustained, but far surpassed in commercial activity in the future; and Ciudad Bolivar, which ranks to-day as the third port of the Republic, would quickly be on a level with the two principal ports of Venezuela, namely, La Guayra and Puerto Cabello.

*Trade with the British Colony of Trinidad.*—For the year 1883 more than seven-eighths of the total value exported passed through the British colony of Trinidad; and in

the year 1884, with the exception of the quantity exported to the United States and Germany, which amounted to £89,849, the entire bulk of exports from the State of Bolivar and the five Federal territories, amounting to the large sum of £916,709, passed through that colony. Now if we consider that, according to the official return of imports from the whole of Venezuela for the year 1883 to the colony of Trinidad, the amount is given at £914,278 (see Trinidad Official Almanack, 1884), and of that amount more than seven-eighths, as before remarked, or £729,229 7s. 6d., was from this section of Venezuela, we shall have an excellent proof of the importance of that colony in connection with the commercial relations of the State of Bolivar. And when it is considered that Trinidad has always been the market not only for the whole of the southern portion of Venezuela, but also of a great part of the coast, embracing the ports of Guiria, Cumaná, Barcelona, Maturin, and Campano, that importance is considerably increased.

That the Venezuelans themselves fully recognise the importance of Trinidad, as regards its commercial relations with the Republic, may be readily inferred, otherwise it is not to be supposed they would continue to trade with it to the extent shown in the returns for the years 1883 and 1884, considering the disadvantages under which they are compelled to do business with that colony at present.

It is worthy of note that, notwithstanding this great obstacle placed in the way of the trade of Trinidad with

Venezuela, viz., the 30 per cent. extra duty on all goods directly imported from that island, the general trade of that colony, if I am correctly informed—and I must say with respect to the information I made every effort to verify it, but failed to do so—has not decreased since the decree establishing the extra duty in the year 1881.

From my general knowledge of Venezuela, and of this section of it particularly, I have no hesitation in saying that I consider the trade with the British colony of Trinidad and this, the southern part of Venezuela, a necessity, and certainly a great advantage to the whole of this sparsely-populated section of the Republic.

Were this part of Venezuela any way reasonably populated, I will not deny but direct trade with Europe and the United States might be productive of many advantages, but in the present conditions I fail to perceive such advantages, if they exist; and most assuredly no disadvantages to the State of Bolivar and its territories in trading with the colony of Trinidad.

It is next to impossible to obtain correct data of the value of imports, the Custom tariff being so excessively high on both imports and exports as to present serious difficulties to commerce in general; and it is not to be wondered at, in view of such an obstacle to trade, that a systematic evasion of duties is carried on, as the reports of the various Administrators of Customs, who have been resident here at one time or another, very conclusively show.

And here it may be observed that it is in a great measure owing to the high revenue tariff that contraband trade prevails in all parts of this section of Venezuela, for which the greatest facility is afforded by the immense network of channels all over the Delta of the Orinoco running into the Gulf of Paria, and by means of which small craft, coming from the Island of Trinidad, are enabled to carry on their law-evading traffic to the great injury of the honest merchant. Notwithstanding the efforts constantly made by the National Government to stop this clandestine trade, so far they appear to be utterly powerless to do so.

It may be questioned how far such a high tariff tends to increase the import trade of a new country like this, from which the revenue of the country is mainly derived; but as that is a matter which concerns the authorities of the country, who, it is to be presumed, have given it all due consideration in connection with the interests and development of the Republic, it does not concern the writer of this report to enter upon the question further than to note that this high tariff, to which 30 per cent. extra is added, bears hard on the trade of the colony of Trinidad.

The import trade of the year 1884, which is unquestionably the best year that this section of Venezuela has ever experienced, scarcely represents 10s. per head of the population given for the State of Bolivar and the five Federal territories therein. Indeed, if the various States on the left bank of the Orinoco, which do considerable trade with Ciudad Bolivar be

taken into consideration, as they really should, the import trade of the year 1884 would not represent one-fifth of 10s. per head of the population.

That contraband has increased immensely during the past three years, dating more particularly from the time the National Government established the extra duty of 30 per cent. on all goods from the Antilles, I have the strongest reasons to believe.

From what has come under my own observation during the time I have been resident at this port, I am led to believe that though contraband trade strikes at the root of legitimate government, by defrauding it of its revenues, deeply injuring the honest trader, and thoroughly demoralising those engaged in it, it is, nevertheless, not looked upon by the poor ignorant inhabitants of the Delta and the coast as a very grievous sin; nor, indeed, even by their masters, if one is to judge from the number of cases of smuggling reported in the official organ of the Republic during the past year, which were brought home to parties of position and intelligence.

That smuggling has always existed in Guayana is well known, and that it has much increased is generally admitted.

The writer of this report, when on a visit to the mining territory in 1883, was much surprised on finding many articles which the revenue tariff prohibits, or renders nearly impossible to introduce owing to the high duty, selling openly in the shops of the different



villagers, and at fairly reasonable prices; such as white loaf sugar, manufactured tobacco, Havannah cigars, brandy, and woollen goods, which are not to be obtained in Cindad Bolivar.

The following extract of the tariff of imports is taken from the English translation of the "Statistical Annuary," 1884 :—

*"Extract of the Tariff on Imports.*—The articles imported from foreign countries through the Custom-house are divided in nine classes, say :

1st free of duties.					
2nd	pays	per	kilo	B.	0'10
3rd	"	"	"	...	0'25
4th	"	"	"	...	0'75
5th	"	"	"	...	1'25
6th	"	"	"	...	2'50
7th	"	"	"	...	5'00
8th	"	"	"	...	10'00
9th	"	"	"	...	20'00

"To the first class (free of duties) belong :—

"Machinery, instruments, and tools for agricultural and mineral works, weaving, sawing, foundries (excepting stills), carriages, utensils and material for railroads and telegraphs, live animals, printed books on sciences, arts, and trades, newspapers, printing papers and utensils, live plants, bridges and their accessories, passengers' baggage, samples of dry goods and others not being fit for sale, gasometres and accessories, fish hooks, coal,

cement, wood for shipbuilding, ordinary woods for building purposes, machinery for arts and trade if imported by the respective tradesmen themselves, springs, axles, and other utensils for coachbuilding, maps, geographical and astronomical globes, ice, guano, eggs, rennet, and plant seeds.

“Duties are charged on the gross weight.

“Importation of the following articles is prohibited :—

“Cocoanut oil, cane, rum, raw cotton, starch, indigo, sugar, cocoa, coffee, honey, wooden toys for children, match splints, salt, tobacco twisted for chewing, sarsaparilla, foreign silver coins not included in the monetary convention of 1865, and coining instruments if not for account of the nation.”

That the articles under Class I are all free of duty is quite true; but that there may be no difficulty about the introduction of such articles, it is essentially necessary that the permission of the National Government be previously obtained.

Besides the before-mentioned duties, according to the extract from the Customs tariff, there is a further duty of  $12\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. called a transit duty, which must be paid on all imports.

To enumerate every article specifically, it would be necessary to write a medium-sized volume; but it may be remarked here that an average cargo of general merchandise coming from Europe pays from 50 to 60 per cent. duties, and an American cargo, consisting of

machinery and provisions, pays no less than from 35 to 45 per cent. duty.

American flour pays 5 dol. 30 c. gold per barrel duty ; American tobacco, 1 dol. 8 c. per kilo. duty ; American rough lumber, 2 c. per kilo. ; kerosine, per bag of 10 gallons, 2 dol. 5 c. duty.

I have been informed by the United States Consul at this port that the American brig "Anita," which arrived here in October, 1883, paid no less than 14,000 dol. gold duty on an average cargo of machinery and provisions ; and on her outward voyage, in November of the same year, 12,000 dol. gold were paid on a cargo of hides, deerskins, Tonquin beans, caoutchouc, coffee and balsam copaiba, though, as he observed, those articles are admitted free of duty into New York.

Export duties are divided into three classes, which are as follows :—1st class, coffee, cotton, cocoa, hides, and indigo pay 5 c. per kilo. gross weight ; 2nd class, 2 c. per kilo. when shipped to ports in the Republic, 7½ c. per kilo. when shipped for foreign ports ; 3rd class, all articles belonging to this class are free: there is, however, a certain amount, according to the value, for the stamped paper, on which the permission to ship the articles is given by the Customs authorities, and this pertains to every article exported—even passengers' baggage is not exempted therefrom. Tonquin beans pay the very high duty of 35 c per lb., gross weight.

The rates of exchange vary very little : bills may be obtained on London, at the rate of 6 pesos 25 c. per £

sterling, and on Paris, at 3 fr. 95 c. per peso, of the value of 4 bolivares.

Money pays from 1 to  $1\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. interest monthly.

I have been informed that the Government of Colombia does not show itself favourably disposed to the developing of the transit trade by way of the Orinoco and Meta ; and this is not to be wondered at, as it is to be supposed that the merchants residing in Barranquilla, the principal port of entry of New Granada, would strongly oppose a trade so unfavourable, as they consider, to their interests.

*Navigation of the River Orinoco.*—Although the Orinoco rolls its vast volume of waters through numerous channels, strictly speaking there are only three of them available for navigation :—The Pedernalez Channel, which falls into the Gulf of Paria, about twelve miles to the southward of Soldiers' Island, only navigable by small vessels ; the Macareo Channel, bearing N.N.W., half west, from Point Icacos, the bar being about twenty miles from the latter, and from there to the nearest point of the river about five miles.

This channel is navigated by steamers of the Orinoco Line, running between Trinidad and Bolivar. The privilege of navigating by this channel was exclusive, but by decrees of the Executive of the past year, 1884 similar concessions to that conceded to the Orinoco Line have been granted to two other companies, and are available for vessels drawing from 8 feet to 9 feet of water ; and lastly, the " Gran Boca," or ship channel,

situated between Cape Savaneta and Burima on one side, and several low islands to the northward, the outermost of which is called "Caugrejo," or "Crab Island."

The entrance to the bar requires careful navigation, as the land is very low and similar all along the coast; and it is only by constant sounding that the right course can be ascertained, as both to the windward and leeward a hard bottom is found, and at the entrance or bar soft mud. When all danger is past the pilot comes on board.

During the rainy season, when the river is high, the voyage to Bolivar can be accomplished without danger of grounding; but the navigation is tedious, and occupies much time, owing to the contrary winds which prevail at that time of the year, together with calms and a powerfully strong current. There have been cases where sailing vessels have taken upwards of fifty days to reach this port.

In the dry season, or during the season of low river, the voyage can be accomplished in eight or ten days, but then it is to be observed that the navigation is attended with much more risk, especially for vessels drawing more than 10 feet, as they are very liable to ground at the shallow places, which are the pass of Yaya, a short distance from the village of Barrancas, on the north side of the river; Mucura, near the forts of Old Guayana and the Isabella, above Port Las Tablas; and lastly, Panapana, a short way below this port.

At no season of the year could vessels drawing more than 16 feet pass the bar safely. Of one instance I have, however, heard. This was H.M.S. "Hydra," whose draught was somewhat more than 16 feet; but in passing the bar she had to force her way in several places through the soft mud.

The river begins to rise in the month of March, and continues rising until August, when it is at its highest; it then commences to fall until February, in which month it is always lowest.

The distance from the "Gran Boca" to this port may be estimated at about 320 miles; and from Port of Spain, by the channel of the "Macareo," at somewhat under 400 miles.

Pilots can always be procured at Port of Spain, both for the navigation of the "Gran Boca" and "Macareo" channel.

With regard to the risk which vessels incur in the navigation of the Orinoco when it is low, it may be said that wreck or serious damage is of rare occurrence, unless such happen through culpable negligence. Of the former a case did occur in the month of October, 1883, to a German brig called the "Bolivar," at a point named Aramaya; and notwithstanding the prompt assistance rendered by the steamer "Bolivar" and the Venezuelan gunboat "Reivindicador," she had to be left to her fate, it being impossible to get her afloat. The cargo and ship's effects were all saved.

Grounding, however, is of very common occurrence when the river is low, and ships are often detained thereby for a considerable time, being compelled to unload to enable them to float and continue their voyage to Bolivar.

*Wharves*, properly so called, there are none; the great rise and fall of the Orinoco renders the erection of them nearly impossible. It would, indeed, prove of incalculable benefit to shipping, and considerably lessen the great labour and heavy expense incurred at present in discharging and loading, were it possible to arrange any contrivance as a substitution for wharves.

When the river is high the difficulties are not so great, as ships are able to come close to the quay and discharge from the deck thereon; but when low, the steepness and irregularity of the immense sand-bank, which exists at that part of the port where foreign vessels have to discharge, makes the use of carts quite out of the question, and renders the work not only expensive but very long. The cargo has to be carried piece-meal on men's shoulders from the brink of the river to the Custom-house, and costs at the rate of 6d. per 120lbs.

The following extract of the Code of Finance taken from the "English Translation" of the "Statistical Annuary" for the year 1884 will be found to contain very important information to shippers and masters of vessels coming to this port, and which, if observed, will be the means of freeing both from much vexation and annoyance :—

*“Extract of the Principal Enactments of the Code of Finances.*—The ports of La Guaira, Puerto Cabello, Cindad Bolivar, and Maracaibo are without restrictions open to the foreign import and export trade; and for the importation of only their local consumption and for exportation, those of Sucre, Pampatar, Carúpano, Guiria, Maturin, Guzman Blanco, and La Vela. The Customs of the ports solely opened for the importation of their internal consumption cannot issue permits for foreign goods to be taken to other ports, whether open to commerce or not, with the following exceptions: Puerto Sucre can do so for Cariaco, Carúpano for Rio Caribe, Guiria for Irapa, Yaguaraparo and other places having river communications with the Gulf of Paria, Pampatur for the whole Island of Margarita, and the port of Guzman Blanco for that of Piritu.

“The inland town of Tachira is open for imports and exports with the United States of Colombia, and that of San Carlos on Rio Negro for the importation of its consumption, the exportation of its products, and coasting trade.

“Any vessel of whatsoever class or nationality, leaving foreign ports for Venezuela loaded or in ballast, must bring a proper clearance and be duly despatched by the respective Venezuelan Consular agent for a port of entry, and are not allowed to touch at any other on the coast of Venezuela but that she is bound to.

“The captains or supercargoes of vessels loading in foreign ports for Venezuela must in each respective port present to the Consul of the Republic a duplicate mani-



fest ("sobordo"), signed by himself, of all the cargo received, and containing in consecutive order, clearly expressed, the following data :—

Class, nationality, tonnage, name of the vessel and captain.

The name of shippers and of their respective consignees at the Venezuelan ports and the bills of lading duly numbered.

The marks and numbers of each package, classified, as boxes, bales, barrels, trunks, kegs, &c.

The number of packages for each port and the totality thereof destined for Venezuela.

"The captain of a vessel receiving a cargo in the West Indies for Venezuela, besides the manifest ("sobordo") and other documents, must present to the Consular agent the duplicate bills of lading that he has signed for each shipper.

"In the manifest of cargo that a vessel brings for Venezuela must be expressed the part, if any, which she takes to foreign parts ; and if the vessel should only touch, without bringing cargo for Venezuela, a copy of the manifest in which the marks and numbers of each package are expressed must be presented certified by the Consular agent. Established lines of steamers calling at fixed ports connecting the commerce of sundry nations are exempted from this requisite.

"The shippers of goods in foreign ports, not West

Indian, destined for Venezuela, must hand to the Venezuelan Consul triplicate signed invoices in the Spanish language, expressing the name of the remitter, to whom remitted, the place of embarkation, port of destination, description, nationality, names of vessel and captain, the mark, number and kind of each package, its contents, gross weight in kilogrammes, and value. Packages of same contents, size, weight and kind, such as bags, boxes, barrels, &c., under the same number and marks may form one item. Packages containing merchandise belonging to different heads of the tariff may be shipped ; but in that case each package will be appraised according to the highest taxed class of goods therein contained.

“ At the port where goods destined for Venezuela are embarked for transshipment to another vessel at another foreign port, the invoice and manifest relative thereto, stating the port of transshipment, must be presented to the Consular agent.

“ The captain of the vessel into which the merchandise is being transhipped will present to the Consul the closed and sealed despatch forwarded by the Consul of the original shipping port addressed to the Collectors of Customs of the port to which the goods are consigned, and besides the manifest from the original port of shipment with a note at foot signed in the Consul's presence, stating that the packages expressed in the manifest have been transhipped to his vessel, and the name, description, nationality, tonnage, and destination thereof.

“In the West Indies transshipment must be made from ship to ship, and if the merchandise be landed it will be considered as proceeding from there, and then the formalities of the case must be complied with. Merchandise from the West Indies are burdened with an additional duty of 30 per cent. on the ordinary duties.

“Consular agents are bound to show gratis to all persons calling on them the Venezuelan Custom laws and the forms of manifests and of invoices with the necessary explanations and information.

“In foreign ports where the Republic has no Consular agent, the documents demanded by law will be presented to the Consul of a friendly Power, and in the absence of such, or his refusing to certify to the above-mentioned documents, two merchants may do so, their signatures to be authenticated by a local public functionary.

“On arrival of the Custom-house visit on board of a vessel from a foreign port, the captain must deliver :—

- 1st. His clearance.
- 2nd. The certified manifests.
- 3rd. The closed and sealed despatches.
- 4th. A set of the bills of lading he has signed.
- 5th. List of spare effects for ship's use and provisions.
- 6th. The register and list of articles for the use of captain and crew.
- 7th. The list of objects as ballast.
- 8th. The correspondence for Venezuela.

“ Within two days after the visit of entry, the captain of a vessel that has arrived in ballast must state in writing to the Customs whether he is going to take in cargo for re-export, and if not going to do so, he must leave the harbour within the following 24 hours.

“ Men-of-war belonging to friendly Powers are not subjected to any kind of formalities unless bringing cargo for private persons, in which case they shall be submitted to the same rules as merchant vessels.

“ After the entrance visit passengers may land with their baggage to be examined at the Custom-house, whatever be the vessel in which they arrive, be they men-of-war or transports, national or foreign.

“ All that is evidently for the use of the passenger is considered as baggage, less furniture, which will pay its respective duties with allowance made for use.

“ Passengers cannot bring in their baggage unused foreign effects, the duties of which would exceed 500 bolivares, and when in excess of this sum the effects causing such excess will be confiscated,

“ Baggage from the West Indies are subject to further requisites than those mentioned, such as the presentation by the passengers of a manifest from the Venezuelan Consul, giving the number of packages, weight, and list of unused objects they bring. This manifest must be presented at the Custom-house; and should it not be presented, the passenger will be subjected to a fine of 100 to 1,000 bolivares, and to the loss of the unused effects. If after the presentation of the manifest

there should be a difference of over 10 per cent. in weight, a fine of double the duties on the difference of the class of effects paying the highest duty will be imposed, and when packages be missing, even should the weight be exact, a fine of 50 to 500 bolivares will be imposed for each missing package, without prejudice in either case of the penalty established when the duties on the unused effects exceed 500 bolivares.

“ The baggage of immigrants coming to the country, free of duty, is clothing, furniture, domestic animals tools or professional instruments, but not articles or objects of commerce that they may bring.

“To enjoy these exceptions the immigrant must present at the Custom-house a certificate of the respective Consul of Venezuela, stating that he comes to be domiciled in this country, and besides a Consular invoice, in which the objects composing his baggage be expressed.”

#### AGRICULTURE.

The agricultural products of the State of Bolivar are of so insignificant a nature as to count for little. A great part of the territory of the Guayana section of the State of Bolivar consists of pasture land; that of the section of Apure may be said to be exclusively so, it being the principal cattle-breeding State of the Republic.

From the dependencies of the State are produced all exportable articles, such as cotton, coffee, cocoa, indigo, tobacco, Tonquin beans, &c.

The climate of this section of the Republic is much too hot for the growing of wheat ; and as flour pays the high duty of more than £1 sterling per barrel, bread is consequently so dear that the labouring and poorer classes are obliged to use Cassava bread as a substitute.

Although, as noted above, the greater portion of the State consists of pasture lands, still as the territory of the State is immense, considerable tracts well adapted to the culture of cotton, cocoa, coffee, tobacco, sugar-cane, and other produce are to be found ; but then the population is so sparse, and the difficulties of communication with the interior are so great, only very few comparatively speaking devote themselves to the cultivation of the soil. Besides, it is to be further observed that since the development of the Guayana gold mines all other pursuits have been in a great measure forsaken to go in quest of the precious metal.

#### MANUFACTURES, &c.

*Manufactures, &c.*, consist of common soap, tallow candles, rum, Cassava bread, cheese, and coarse brown sugar, which are only produced in limited quantities.

During the year 1884 the National Government conceded to Messrs. Frustrich Brothers, of this city, a special privilege for the manufacture of dynamite. This privilege, which is exclusive, is for the term of twenty years, and has been granted ostensibly for the purpose of supplying the gold mines of Guayana with dynamite. Messrs. Frustrich Brothers have transferred the concession to Messrs. Nobel, of Paris, who have

formed a company under the title of "Sociudad Anonima Nacional Venezolana de la Dinamita Nobel," with a nominal capital of 400,000 bolivares, or about £16,000. The capital is said to have been subscribed by a group of French and Venezuelan investors, and the prices fixed for the sale of the "Nobel" dynamite in this city are—for No. 1, 2s. 3d. per lb., and for No. 2, 1s. 3d. per lb.

#### EMIGRATION.

Emigration from the British West Indies to the mines of Guayana in the Federal territory of Yuruary continues. During the year 1883, 1,684 British subjects arrived here from Trinidad en route for the mining district; the number arrived here during the year 1884 was 1,741. These numbers do not include the native-born Englishmen, of whom a large number came for the different mining companies.

In connection with emigration it may be well to observe here that National Government issued a decree in the month of July to the effect that all passengers coming from the West Indies to Venezuela must be provided with passports; and this same regulation applies to passengers from Europe if the vessel touch at any of the West India Islands.

All persons coming to this section of Venezuela must necessarily pass through the Island of Trinidad, unless they come direct from the United States, or in sailing vessels from Europe, and consequently are bound to provide themselves with passports, not, as many imagine,

to be obtained from the authorities of that colony, but from the Venezuelan Consul resident at Port of Spain ; and it is well to mention that the decree relating to passports refers not only to entering the country, but also to leaving it. And for the information of all those coming to this section of Venezuela, I consider it necessary to state that the passports to be procured on leaving the country are not obtained from the British Vice-Consul, as numbers of persons come to the Consulate in search of them on the occasions of the sailing of the steamer " Bolivar " for Trinidad, but from the President of the State of Bolivar.

As the agents of the Orinoco Line, both in Ciudad Bolivar and in Port of Spain will issue no ticket to anyone not provided with a passport from the Venezuelan authorities, information relating to the procuring of them may be obtained at these agencies.

Indeed, I am of opinion that passports are never examined by anyone connected with the Government, the simple reason that the agents of the Orinoco Line appear to undertake that work, both in regard to issuing tickets and admitting passengers on board the steamers. I here speak from actual knowledge, having come from Caracas to this city a few days after the decree relating to passports was issued by the Ministry of the Interior in the month of July, 1884.

#### RAILWAYS.

It was noted in the report on the Federal territory of Yuruary, 1883, that a railway had been projected, and



surveys even made, from the Orinoco to the mining district; but so far nothing more has been done in connection with the matter, and it is presumed the enterprise has fallen through.

#### CREDIT AND TRADE SYSTEMS OF CINDAD BOLIVAR.

That credit stimulates trade there can be little doubt, but when not based on good principles it often results in serious disasters, and leads to much evil. In this section of Venezuela people are by no means adverse to credit; indeed, owing to the competition which exists to-day, and the eagerness to obtain customers, particularly among the shopkeeping class, it may be said to be universal in the State of Bolivar. The poor as well as the rich succeed in obtaining credit from the shopkeeper, butcher, baker, grocer, tailor, and apothecary; and were those parties to try to act on the cash principle, they would quickly find out that their business was being much curtailed thereby. Of course, responsible people are more or less adverse to credits; but in a country like this, in which one has to pay very high prices for all imported articles, and even for those articles produced for consumption in the country, the cash purchaser has no advantage over those who buy on credit, particularly in regard to the necessities of life—although such a purchaser may receive some favour when buying large quantities of merchandise from merchants, who, no doubt, would find it to their interest to allow the cash purchaser 10 to 12½ or more per cent. discount.

As far as I am aware, there are no sumptuary laws in Venezuela for regulations concerning credits. The Government exercises no vigilance over the private economy of the people, nor does it pretend in any way to regulate their expenses.

From conversations I have had with various merchants of this city, I have learned that credit prevails, in proportion to the amount of business done, to the extent of from 80 to 90 per cent. The bulk of sales are, as a rule, made on credits from six to twelve months and longer; the immense distances at which customers live from Cindad Bolivar, the entrepôt of trade for the whole of the southern part of Venezuela, and the want of ways of communication, having much to do with such matters. Cash transactions in the wholesale trade are rare; and it may be said that, owing to the long credits granted by commercial houses in Europe and the United States to merchants in this country, they (the merchants) do not appear to be particularly solicitous on that point. It might be inferred from the conditions of the country that the percentage of losses incidental to business is very large, and yet such is not the case. If I am correctly informed, it does not exceed 10 per cent. The immense profits made on good sales allows of a very wide margin in this respect.

In this section of Venezuela the consumer pays for all, and on that account the importer or shopkeeper finds that it is to his interest to be somewhat indulgent in the matter of credit.

Mechanics and labourers have all the benefits of credit, and when they are steady and industrious credit is never refused them in relation to their wages.

There is no interest demanded on time accounts, but it is to be supposed that such interest is more or less made up for in the prices of articles sold, the length of time and class of customers being considered.

The evils of credit are most conspicuous among the working classes, and among people in general who exceed their incomes; and among the mercantile class they are most apparent in those who buy from the importers for the purpose of trading with the interior.

The produce of the country is at all times sold for cash, and is always sure of finding a ready market; imported merchandise is sold on time.

Credits of record (mortgages, judgments, &c.) are not prevalent in this city, nor in the State, as far as I am aware, but are affected in the following manner:—A party having property, say a house worth £4,000, and being in want of money, pawns the house to another who is disposed to accommodate him, say for £3,000, with the agreement to pay the amount borrowed, with interest of 1 per cent. a month, within a certain time; which failing to do, the house becomes forfeited to the party advancing the money thereon, without any necessity of recurring to courts of law to recover such money.

Persons failing in business, provided they act fairly with their creditors, have no difficulty in resuming such business again; the only obstacles to be met with in so doing being the re-establishing of their credit.

Bankruptcy is not frequent, and occurs principally among the shopkeepers of the interior. Merchants in Cindad Bolivar as a rule do not like to carry a man failing in business through the courts. They prefer to give him time to realise as much as possible, and then make the best arrangements they can according to the circumstances.

It cannot be said that fortunes are either readily lost or made in this part of the world. A respectable competence is always to be made in business, provided it be conducted with judgment and prudence. It is quite true large sums of money have been made in connection with the gold mines some years past, and even at present some few there are who draw magnificent incomes from the world-famed El Callao gold mines; but fortunes as understood in Europe and the United States in the nineteenth century, are extremely rare in this quarter of the globe.

The general effects of the credit system in this section of Venezuela are beneficial, I think; and I am of opinion that the great increase in business at this port during the past five years is principally due to it.

The foregoing remarks referring to the credit and trade systems of Cindad Bolivar were suggested by seeing a circular from the Department of State,

Washington, U.S., to the American Consul at this port, asking for information thereon.

*Contracts, &c.*—Since the year 1881 the National Government, in its efforts to promote the development of this section of the Republic, has entered into contracts with various parties for the purpose of colonising the State and territories, building railroads, establishing lines of steamers on the Orinoco and its tributaries, promoting foreign emigration, bringing coolies to the country, establishing various classes of industries, &c., of which, however, up to the present, not one, and there are quite a number, has been carried out.

To give a complete list of all these contracts might possibly be of some interest to parties in England ; but as there have been numerous modifications in some, and others having lapsed through not having been carried out within the time specified, and again a number of others extended as circumstances required and it not being possible to keep track of all these changes, I have consequently considered it better not to insert such contracts in this report, lest by so doing, for the above-mentioned reason, they might not be given with accuracy. A few, however, may be noted as of particular interest : one, a contract for the navigation of the Rivers Orinoco and Meta by a line of steamers. This was made with Mr. Simon B. O'Leary in 1881, and was extended for another year in August, 1883 ; so far nothing has been done towards the carrying out of it. Another, entered

into with Mr. Esteban Ibarra Heirera in July last, and approved by Congress this year, 1885, for the purpose of founding a colony, constructing railways, telegraphs, and exploiting of all metals in the lands belonging to the Government in the Federal territory Yuruary. This contract is for the term of 99 years, and bears a strong likeness to that entered into with General Pulgar, but which was annulled. A third is that of the great Delta of the Orinoco. A fourth is that of the Federal territory Caura, with Messrs. Polly, Aurrecoechea & Co., And a fifth for the manufacture of dynamite, with Messrs. Frustrich Bros., of this city, specially noticed already in this report, and which, as an exception, has been carried out.

Considering the exclusive privileges conceded to the holders of contracts, and the length of time for which they hold good, it may be said that private enterprise is completely set aside in all parts of the State of Bolivar and the Federal territories.

It is to be sincerely hoped, however, that some good may accrue, sooner or later, to this important section of the Republic, from the generous and praiseworthy efforts made by the National Government, by the making of these contracts, to develop the former great State of Guayana, for by this name the whole of the southern part of Venezuela is best known to the outside world.

*Locust Plague.*—In the month of December this State

was visited by the locust plague, which has caused and is still causing the greatest ravages all over the valley of Caracas and State of Carabobo.

Although it is next to impossible to give an idea of the countless myriads which passed over this city in January and February of this year, still some faint idea may be formed from the fact that for three weeks so dense were the masses to be seen all over this neighbourhood, and as far as the eye could reach over the Orinoco and the plains on both sides of the river, that between the hours of three and six in the afternoon the light of day was obscured.

They did not remain very long about here, probably due to the fact that little was found of their accustomed food to devour. The direction of their flight was due east towards the coast.

I am enabled, through the kindness of a gentleman to whom the State of Guayana and particularly the gold mines of the Yuruary owes much, to give the following extract from a letter written by a gentleman of much experience in mining, and one holding a prominent position in connection with one of the most important companies of the mining district at present :—

“ I think that a mining law, if one is enacted, should be based on the Mexican law, or upon that of the United States, which is copied from it.

“ The main and important feature of the law is the

facility and cheapness with which it enables a prospector, or discoverer of mines, to secure titles to them, which hold good as long as the prescribed amount of work is done upon the mines; and if the work is not done the title to the lode reverts to the Government.

“The granting of large concessions of mining land should be prohibited; those prevent the developing of the mines.

“Titles should be granted only to lodes with sufficient land to permit their proper working. All timber on Government land should be declared free to the mines, to use for mining purposes. A law of this character would by its encouragement to the prospector hasten the development of the lodes of the country, and the Government would reap more benefit by the increase of population and the attraction of foreign capital than it can by direct taxes upon the mines.

“Although there are in Venezuela vast areas of unprospected mining ground, at present prospecting for gold mines is almost abandoned, for the reason that it is so difficult and expensive to obtain titles to a lode when it is found. No poor man—and prospectors are usually poor men—can afford to get a title to a mine in this country; therefore why should they spend their time and energies in looking for them.”

The foregoing is so thoroughly in accord with the views expressed in the report of the Minister of War, that little room is left for doubt as to the necessity of



something being done by the National Government for this very important section of Guayana.

*Roads.*—The different roads from Guacipati to the port of San Felix, Cindad Bolivar, by way of Guri, and that leading to Callao, as well as the various others to different parts of the district, are in the most wretched condition. I really believe they have never been looked after; they are so frightfully cut up, and even dangerous to travel over in many parts.

The one leading to Callao, being the shortest and most frequented, has had my first attention. It has been well repaired, and no difficulty will be experienced for some time to come by the heavy bullock-waggons in getting over it. This work has been carried out without encroaching in any way on the revenue of the territory.

The roads leading to the port of San Felix on the Orinoco and Cindad Bolivar being considerably longer, will require funds to put them in a proper condition.

It is unnecessary to observe that these works are of the utmost importance and greatest necessity to the mining district, and the repairing of those principal routes of communication to the territory will be the means of diminishing the length of time now taken in transporting machinery and merchandise to the mines.

*Administration of Justice.*—Although a great deal has been done in this branch of the administration, it must,

however, be confessed there still remains much that requires serious attention and consideration.

One very important point in connection therewith is that there exists no superior court in the territory, wherein all civil and criminal cases might be tried without the necessity of having to send, according to the code which governs here, such cases to the capital of the Republic, which causes them to be prolonged to an interminable length, besides the great cost, vexation, and trouble which such a mode of proceeding necessarily entails.

In view of such considerations, and of others which will not escape the penetration of the National Government, I consider it indispensable to the better administration of the territory that a superior court or courts be established here for the trial of all cases, both civil and criminal.

It is also well to mention that although the petty courts of the territory are all presided over by honourable judges, the salaries of those gentlemen in no way corresponds to the duties and responsibilities which such high offices demand.

Indeed, it may be said that the amount paid them is not by any means sufficient for their most urgent necessities, as living here is exceedingly dear. I am consequently of opinion that more adequate salaries should be paid, so that the very shadow of temptation may not come in the way of those administering justice.

And this also refers to the prefects of the various districts and officials of the Government, who are all underpaid. I do not think it is possible to have men qualified for their duties, who will wholly devote themselves to the interests of the Government, for the insignificant and certainly not sufficient salaries they now receive.

*Postal Service.*—This branch of the public service in the Federal territory, so important and delicate, is in the worst possible condition. The conditions of good postal communication, so essential to commerce, industry, and society in general, consist in the security and due regularity of the receiving and transmission of correspondence. And these are exactly what are wanting in the postal service of the territory.

The mails are carried to and from this city to the port of San Felix by men on foot, who, unable to carry such a heavy load, as the mail from the territory generally is, are compelled to leave a part behind; and even then it is not always the man arrives in time for the steamer. The result is much serious inconvenience is caused, not alone to the inhabitants of the territory, but to those outside of it, who naturally look for their correspondence on the arrival of the steamer either at Ciudad Bolivar or Trinidad, as the case may be.

And this state of things must continue as long as no proper and well-organised mail service exists.

The law which governs the territory does not allow

of the expense necessary to remedy the evil, and on this account I beg leave respectfully to recommend the matter of the postal service of the Yuruary to the serious consideration of the National Government, in the hope that something may be promptly done to better the present bad postal system.

To make any comment on the concession of the Grand Delta of the Orinoco is quite unnecessary. I shall only add that, although this grant be of immense extent, it does not appear to include the whole of the concessions granted to Fitzgerald by the Venezuelan Government, if the news which I received here in the month of November can be relied on. It is that the above-named gentleman has obtained another grant, which comprises all Venezuelan territory (?) from the Essequibo to the Gulf of Paria, east of the 62° of longitude. This concession, the report of which is said to be published, although I have not seen it, is said to comprise no less than 25,000 square miles, and lies principally between the parallel 4° and 8° north latitude, and 61° and 63° south longitude.

According to the code of organisation of Federal territories decreed by the illustrious American, General Guzman Blanco, President of the Republic, dated August 23, 1882, the territory of Amazonas was divided into two territories, called Alto Orinoco and Amazonas.

The territory Alto Orinoco is comprised between the following limits : Amazonas and a part of Guayana on the south, Brazil on the east, United States of Colombia

and State of Apure on the west, and north the River Orinoco and Guayana.

It is divided into two departments, namely San Fernando and Yavita, and one district called Vichada. The capital of the territory is San Fernando de Atabapo, with a population of about 400 inhabitants.

The extent in square miles of the territory, according to the "Statistical Annuary," 1884, is 124,124 miles, and its population, as given by the same authority, is 18,230 inhabitants, of which number more than 10,000 inhabit the Vichada and Muco.

To give an idea of how little of the vast region which forms to-day the territory Alto Orinoco is really known, it will be sufficient to quote the words of Mr. J. B. Dalla Costa, a former President of the State of Guayana, who visited this territory some years ago;—

"In the visit which I made to the department Alto Orinoco, I was greatly surprised to find that even the oldest inhabitants of that part of the State were completely ignorant of the topography, nature, and other conditions of the lands which lie to the south of the different ridges of mountains, some leagues distant from the Orinoco, in the interior of the districts Urbana, Caicara, and Cuchivero."

And it may be affirmed, notwithstanding the efforts made by General Guzman Blanco to obtain a thorough knowledge of this region, that little or no exploration has been made up to the present day of the interior,

and consequently no information is to be obtained of its supposed great wealth of minerals and vegetable products.

From the report of the Governor to the Minister of the Interior for the year 1884, no information relating to explorations, &c., is to be obtained, the whole of the report referring principally to the local administration of San Fernando de Atabapo and a few adjacent villages, which has little interest for persons outside of Venezuela.

The general health of the territory has been good during the year; a new cemetery has been made in San Fernando, and a church is being built in the same place. There are three Federal schools in the territory, which were opened in September, 1884, and show an attendance of only 39 pupils out of a population of 18,724 inhabitants, according to the latest returns 1883.

Cindad Bolivar, May 12, 1885.



## APPENDIX D.

*Extract from Convention between Great Britain and Netherlands, signed at London, August 13th, 1814.*

## ARTICLE I.

His Britannic Majesty engages to restore to the Prince Sovereign of the United Netherlands, within the term which shall be hereafter fixed, the Colonies, Factories, and Establishments which were possessed by Holland at the commencement of the late war, viz., on the 1st January, 1803, in the seas and on the continents of America, Africa, and Asia, with the *exception* of the Cape of Good Hope, and the settlements of *Demarara Essequibo* and *Berbice*, of which possessions the high contracting parties reserve to themselves the right to dispose by a supplementary convention hereafter to be negotiated according to their mutual interests and especially with reference to the provisions contained in the 6th and 7th Articles of the Treaty of Peace signed between His Britannic Majesty and his most Christian Majesty on the 30th of May, 1814.

## ARTICLE III.

The places and forts in the colonies and settlements to be ceded and exchanged by the two high contracting parties shall be given up in the state they may be at the moment of signature of the present convention.

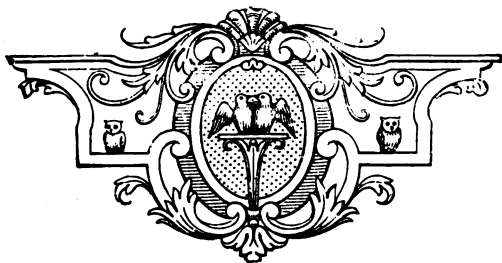
## ADDITIONAL ARTICLE.

In consideration, and in satisfaction of the above engagements, as taken by His Britannic Majesty, the Prince, Sovereign of the Netherlands, agrees to *cede in full Sovereignty*, to His Britannic Majesty, the Cape of Good Hope, and the settlements of *Demarara, Essequibo, and Berbice*.

*Extract from Treaty of Paris, May 30, 1814.*

## ARTICLE 6.

Holland, placed under the Sovereignty of the House of Orange, shall receive an increase of territory.

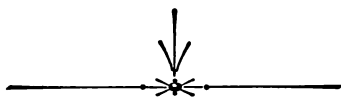




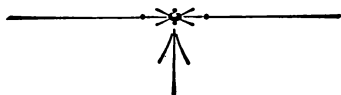


*ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.*

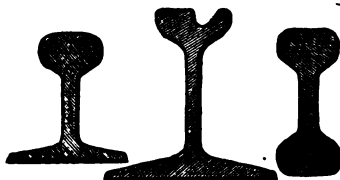




**LONDON:**  
**POTTER BROTHERS' STEAM PRINTING WORKS,**  
**440-42, KINGSLAND ROAD, E.**



# BOLLING & LOWE, London.



**RAILS** (Iron and Steel), New, Perfect and slightly defective, 2,000 tons in stock; sheets of sections sent on application.

**STEEL SLEEPERS** for all gauges, rolled and stamped  
**SWITCHES & CROSSINGS, TURNTABLES, TRAVERSERS.**

**LIGHT PORTABLE RAILWAY AND ROLLING STOCK** for Mines, Plantations, Contractors' Work, etc.

**MINING PLANT** of every description.

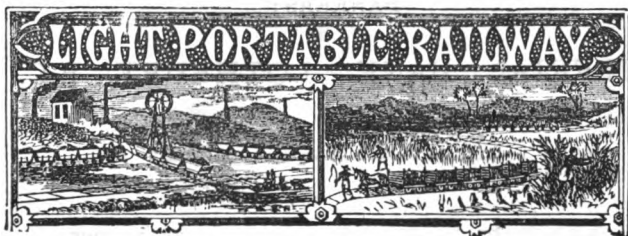
**LIGHT RAILWAYS** for New Countries, Feeders, etc.

*See illustrated catalogues.*

---

SOLE REPRESENTATIVES (EUROPEAN) FOR  
ASBESTOS STEAM PACKING Co., BOSTON.

**"STOW" FLEXIBLE SHAFT.**



**BOLLING & LOWE,**

(FORMERLY Wm. BIRD & Co.)  
ESTABLISHED OVER 50 YEARS.

*2, Laurence Pountney Hill,*

TELEGRAPHIC ADDRESS, "BIRD, LONDON."  
TELEPHONE No. 1530.

**LONDON.**

**SAMUEL JAMES,**

Stock Broker & Mining Share Dealer,

**14, ANGEL COURT,**

**THROGMORTON STREET, LONDON, E.C.**

---

MEMBER OF THE

**REDRUTH MINING EXCHANGE.**

---

BANKERS:

**IMPERIAL BANK, LOTHBURY, E.C.**

---

**Apply** to S. J. if you have any business as  
buyer or seller of Home, Colonial or Foreign Mining  
Shares.

# SHERWOOD & VERNEZ,

45, Ludgate Hill, London,

## WHOLESALE AND EXPORT DEALERS.

HAMS.



BACON.

Shippers of Best York Hams, Wiltshire Bacon,  
Cheese, Potted Meats, Pickles, and Jams of  
Best Quality.

---

*Wholesale Orders and Shipments executed with  
punctuality and dispatch.*

---

FOREIGN TRADE MADE A SPECIALITY.

---

SHERWOOD & VERNEZ,  
45, Ludgate Hill, London.

# United States Gold Placers, LIMITED.

---

CAPITAL £150,000 in £1 SHARES.

---

NO EXPENSIVE MACHINERY REQUIRED.

---

WATER POWER NEVER FAILS.

---

First year's working, it is believed, will pay for  
the whole Property.

---

*July 13th, 1886, Practical Test, 78 cents. per yard.*

---

## LATEST REPORT :

Property quite up to what has been stated, and ought to pay  
very well. People here are trying to buy up placer ground in  
every direction round us. This looks well.

---

All applications for Shares should be made to

*Jensin Low & Nephew*

---

3, BROAD STREET BUILDINGS,

LONDON, E.C.

Or to your own BROKER.

BOILER EXPLOSIONS PREVENTED.

Enamelled Gauge Glasses Superseded,

BY USING

**BARRY, JONES & CO.'S**  
Patent Reflecting Gauge Glass Indicators.

No. 12,016. A.D. 1885.

---

The INDICATOR is made of Metal and Enamelled, is easily applied, does not require to be renewed, cannot be broken, and is practically indestructible.

---

Especially valuable in dark and confined Stoke-holes. Indicates height of water instantly at a glance, at any distance, and from any point of sight.

Height of water shown as plainly at night as in the daylight. When the boiler is full the tube is colored throughout.

---

Can be had from any respectable Ironmonger or Engineers' Factor, in any quantities, or from the Agents.

---

12-Inch Indicators,	12/-	per doz.
18-Inch do.	15/-	do.

Terms—Cash.

---

AGENTS FOR THE UNITED KINGDOM—  
**J. B. TREASURE & Co.,**  
GAUGE GLASS MAKERS,  
8, Vauxhall Road, LIVERPOOL.

---

**Caution.**—It is intended to protect this Patent to the utmost, and all parties are cautioned against infringing the same by the sale or manufacture of colourable imitations. A liberal reward will be paid by the Solicitors to the Agents, for information as to pirating this invention.

A NECESSITY FOR DENTISTS.

---

THE PORTABLE  
DENTAL SALIVA PUMP  
(FORSTER'S PATENT),

Entirely supersedes the present cumbrous  
arrangements, and cisterns.

---

Can be carried in the pocket.

PRICE IN CASE 10/6.

---

SOLE AGENTS :—

**Messrs. Ash & Sons,**  
**Manufacturers of all Dentists' Goods,**  
**6, 7, 8, & 9, BROAD STREET,**  
*Golden Square, London.*



Every one should see

**'The ROYAL MYSTERY'**

Otherwise called

**PROTEUS,**

OR

*Mysterious Disappearances.*

---

By this extraordinary illusion, persons standing on the stage are made to disappear suddenly, before the eyes of the astonished spectators, without veil or cover of any sort.

Pronounced by the Press to be the most marvellous illusion ever produced.

---

Agent for the Patentees :—

**HUGH DIDCOT,**  
DRAMATIC AGENT,

68, WATERLOO ROAD, LONDON,

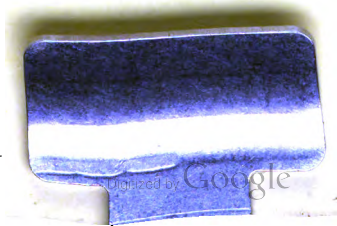
*To whom all applications for Engagements must  
be made.*

71  
191.

A







UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN - UNIV LIBS



**3018260403**

**0 5917 3018260403**